



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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8th June 2022

Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: donnchadh.olaoighaire@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Ó Laoghaire,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

PQ 26863/22

To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure that all positions within the children's disability network teams are filled and there are no gaps in staffing.

HSE Response

The HSE acknowledges the challenges in meeting the demand for children's disability services and is acutely conscious of how this impacts on children and their families. An additional 190 posts have been allocated this year to Children's Disability Services in addition to the 185 posts in 2021, which will support the implementation of family centred services across all CDNTs. These additional posts are intended to support the newly established CDNTs to prioritise intervention for children with complex needs.

In parallel, the recently published Department of Health Waiting List Action Plan provides for funding to address community waiting lists for children.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)

Progressing Disability Services (PDS) is a significant change programme. All 91 teams are now in place. These teams provide services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age. The team will work closely together with the child and family to identify the child's and family's own priorities and agree a plan to address those goals. Children and their families will have access to a range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs and within available resources. This includes universal interventions such as information sessions, talks and programmes for families on particular topics, targeted interventions for groups of children and/or parents with identified similar needs, e.g. PECS training, Lámh training, Hanen, Incredible Years, and direct interventions for a child and family to address a significant identified need that cannot be met by a universal or targeted intervention.

A Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) Staff Census and Workforce Review was undertaken in October 2021. The final report has been finalised and issued to the Department of Health and relevant stakeholders. This report has provided valuable information on the number of staff working in



the CDNTs by discipline and grade. This information will allow targeted workforce planning by the HSE in consultation with the Children's Disability Network Managers (CDNM) to reinforce the skill mix of their teams to accommodate local population need.

The Census and Workforce Review shows that the average staff vacancy rate in CDNTs across the nine Community Healthcare Organisations Areas is 28%. This figure includes unfilled 2021 development posts as well as other vacancies arising from retirements, resignations, maternity leaves, etc.

Most of the disciplines working in CDNTs are similar to those working in other areas of the health services including Primary Care Services, Mental Health Services, Older Person Services and Acute Hospitals. The HSE experiences ongoing challenges recruiting staff across a range of disciplines and grades.

The HSE continues to explore a range of options to support the recruitment of essential staff across all aspects of the health services. In addition, the HSE works collaboratively with the CDNT Lead Agencies to progress recruitment initiatives for these teams. Each lead agency is responsible for recruitment of staff on their CDNTs and can use a variety of approaches to fill funded vacancies. The detail regarding lead agencies is provided below.

Lead Agency	No. of CDNTs
HSE	41
Enable Ireland	20
Brothers of Charity	6
Central Remedial Clinic	5
Avista (Daughters of Charity)	4
St Michael's House	4
Cope Foundation	3
St Gabriel's	2
St Joseph's Foundation	2
Stewarts Care	2
CoAction West Cork	1
Kare	1
Total	91

A comprehensive team development programme has been provided for CDNMs and cascaded to all team members. This programme which was designed to support the establishment of the new CDNTs and to support the implementation of the new model of service will also support staff retention.

Yours sincerely



Bernard O'Regan
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations