

30th November 2022

Deputy Jackie Cahill
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Email: Jackie.Cahill@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ/57402/22

To ask the Minister for Health the reason for the lack of consistency in psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language and physiotherapy appointments for children with physical and or intellectual disabilities in North Tipperary, either in the Belmont Centre in Nenagh, County Tipperary or through school visits and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cahill

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The North Tipperary Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT), in line with national policy, follow a bio-psychosocial model of service delivery, which, through family-centred practice by an interdisciplinary team, recognises that all children and their families are unique. The services offered are based on the child's individual needs and family priorities as identified in the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). An interdisciplinary approach involves team members from different disciplines working together to achieve goals focused on a child's strengths and challenges. It recognises that each family has its own role, values, structures, beliefs and coping styles and it aims to strengthen a family's own abilities in dealing with their child's challenges. This approach is supported by national and international best practice.

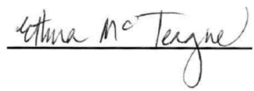
For this reason, the disciplines supporting families may appear inconsistent, as different members of the interdisciplinary team work to support families, depending on the specific abilities and needs of the child and their family and depending on who on the team has the experience and expertise to provide the required support.

With regards to visits to schools in the area, visits are arranged where a goal has been identified that requires support through the school system, or where the school has requested a visit and the child and family agree that the issued raised is a priority for them and consents to members of the CDNT visiting the school.

Availability of CDNT staff is also impacted by any vacant positions on the team and by capacity of the CDNT to meet the needs of the growing caseload. There are challenges locally and nationally with recruitment at the present time. However, every effort is made to fill any and all vacant posts in North Tipperary CDNT. In addition, the HSE has provided funding for backfill for all maternity leaves in 2021 and 2022. The HSE are aware that staffing resources remain a challenge across all teams within the Mid-West as caseload numbers have risen significantly over the past ten years. This is continually highlighted by senior management of HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare at national level with submissions for additional resources. Disability Services review resources on a regular basis to allocate any additional available funding to priority areas.

I trust this clarifies the situation but should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ethna McTeague". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ethna McTeague
General Manager
Mid-West Disability Services