



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Head of Service,
Mid-West Disability Services
HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare,
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25th November 2022

Deputy Jackie Cahill
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Email: Jackie.Cahill@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ/57403/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of clients that each psychologist has on their list in relation to the two new psychologists positions recently filled in north Tipperary for disability services; his views on whether further psychologists are required in the area to provide the necessary services; 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.

I can confirm that the North Tipperary Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) currently have 7.0 Whole time Equivalent Psychology posts:

- 2.0 WTE Senior Psychology posts filled;
- 4.0 WTE Staff Grade Psychology posts, 2.0 WTE filled and 2.0 vacant;
- 1.0 WTE Psychology Assistant post filled.

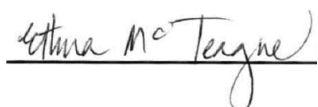
The North Tipperary CDNT currently has a caseload of 1473 children, of which 339 are on the waiting list for supports. As the CDNT currently operates under a Family Centred Practice model of service, the demand for Psychology input depends on the goals and priorities identified by the family during the Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP). It is not possible to give a caseload figure for each Psychologist as the number of clients requiring psychology input changes on a daily basis. In addition to this, the CDNT receives requests from schools and families seeking support around school placements and psychology input is also critical to the ASD assessment process. North Tipperary CDNT currently has 42 clients requiring an ASD assessment.

Despite repeated recruitment efforts, the North Tipp CDNT have been unable to fill the vacant Staff grade Psychology posts. One of these posts has been vacant since March 2022, the other since May 2022. The challenge to recruit staff grade Psychologists is echoed across the Mid-West and nationally. This undoubtedly reduces the CDNT's ability to meet the demand for supports and assessments where the input of a Psychologist is required.

The HSE are aware that staffing resource remains a challenge across all teams within the Mid-West as caseloads have risen significantly over the past 10 years. This is continually highlighted at national level with submissions for additional resources. Disability Services review resources on a regular basis to allocate any available additional funding to priority areas such as ASD assessment.

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, reading "Ethna McTeague", is written over a horizontal line.

Ethna McTeague
General Manager
Mid-West Disability Services