



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

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
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8<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Deputy David Cullinane,  
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Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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

**PQ: 58744/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health if he plans to take any measures to increase awareness of developmental coordination disorder, commonly known as dyspraxia, among medical and nursing staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 58745/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full-year cost to increase awareness of developmental coordination disorder, commonly known as dyspraxia, and to fund research in this area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 58746/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the services and or supports that are available to children with developmental coordination disorder, commonly known as dyspraxia; if there are plans to increase current supports; and if he will make a statement on the matter*

**HSE Response**

Children with dyspraxia may have difficulty with thinking, planning and carrying out sensory/motor tasks, and may benefit from the therapeutic support of healthcare professionals. They also need support and understanding in the education system to help them reach their full potential.

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay ensures that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs rather than based on diagnosis. Many children with dyspraxia who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream child health services. This policy provides a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate



service (Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties).

National HSE Disability and Primary Care are working together collaboratively with Community Health Organisations via their Chief Officers to support implementation of the HSE's National Policy on Access to Services for Children with a Disability or Developmental Delay.

From a health perspective, there are a number of therapies that can support children with dyspraxia. These include Occupational Therapy to find ways to develop coordination and complete everyday tasks and Speech and Language Therapy, to improve speech and communication skills.

While many children with dyspraxia will access unidisciplinary occupational therapy services via Primary Care, a proportion with more complex needs are referred to disability services.

### **Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)**

Children's disability services are provided based on the presenting needs of the child rather than by their diagnosis or the actual type of disability or service required. Services are provided following individual assessment according to the child's individual requirements and support needs. The HSE is committed to the full implementation of the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS). PDS is a significant change programme for the provision of services and supports for children from birth to 18 years of age, in line with Sláintecare and the Programme for Government.

In line with the PDS model, resources assigned to children's disability services are allocated to the Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs); 91 CDNTs are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and are providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team works closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities.

Since 2019, more than 610 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. These posts have been assigned to teams based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area. This figure includes the 190 posts provided in 2022 as well as the recently agreed funding for an additional 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.

These additional posts are intended to support the newly established CDNTs to prioritise intervention for children with complex needs in special schools.

Children and their families will have access to a range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

### **Funding**

€8.2 million was provided for CDNTs in 2022. This was for the targeted provision of 190 multi-disciplinary, administration and specialised posts for the teams. Also €11.48m was agreed for the additional 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.

The HSE also provides funding and works collaboratively with organisations such as Dyspraxia Ireland who aim to raise awareness of Dyspraxia in Ireland and create a better understanding of the difficulties people with Dyspraxia and their families face. They also provide information sharing and

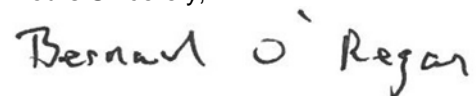


support network for people with Dyspraxia and their families and provide a link to professionals for people with Dyspraxia/DCD and their families.

Dyspraxia Ireland is registered as a voluntary organisation which states that it aims to empower individuals with Dyspraxia/DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder) and their families by raising awareness and understanding of the condition and promoting improvements in diagnostic, therapeutic and education services through research and advocacy. It runs a number of support groups throughout the country as well as a national help and support line to all those affected by Dyspraxia. In addition, they work closely with the Occupational Therapy Department in University of Limerick regarding various initiatives.

The HSE Disability Services provides funding to Dyspraxia Ireland under a grant aid agreement, which amounts to €50,000 per year.

Yours Sincerely,



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

