



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

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28th October 2022

Deputy John Lahart,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: john.lahart@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Lahart,

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 52186/22

To ask the Minister for Health when the HSE will commence the process of prioritising the allocation announced in Budget 2023 of the 136 additional staff such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists to special schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

Further to recent agreement with Government, the HSE and its CDNT Lead Agencies will receive funding for an additional 136.3 WTEs to provide services in 104 special schools. These posts are intended to support the CDNTs to provide the pre-existing level of on-site health and social care supports. They are in addition to the 85 posts provided to support special schools in 2021.

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

At the request of Government, the HSE has agreed to prioritise the allocation of staff to these special schools on a phased basis as follows:

Phase 1 – September 2022

Reassigning existing CDNT therapy hours to fill one third (circa. 44 WTE) of the special school requirement from school opening in September 2022. Local discussion will determine which CDNTs have capacity to align staff to these roles as quickly as possible. This phase has been delayed by an industrial relations process with Fórsa trade union following an instruction of non-cooperation to its members. This initiative ensures continued collaboration between the CDNTs and Special Schools and was intended to provide the equivalent of 44 clinical posts to support the needs of children in special schools from September 2022.

Phase 2 – September 2022 to November 2022

Providing a further one third of the required therapy hours (circa. 44 WTE) via existing staff grade panels and supported with further assignment of suitably experienced CDNT staff to the special school through September and as the autumn school term progresses and staff continue to be recruited/assigned.



Phase 3 – a range of initiatives to be commenced immediately

Filling all remaining CDNT posts including those that will support special schools as quickly as possible via the range of targeted recruitment detailed above.


Posts currently in place

August 2022 reporting indicated that 50.95 of the 85 posts allocated to support special schools in 2021 were filled.

During the first week of September the equivalent of 20.24 whole time equivalent posts were assigned to special schools as part of phase 1 above. Updated reporting has been impacted by Forsa's instruction of non-cooperation.

Intensive engagement with the Forsa trade union is on-going to address the concerns of its members with regard to this project.

Yours Sincerely,



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