



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

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
Disability Services/Social Care Division,  
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9<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns,  
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Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie](mailto:holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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 43803/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he is taking to recruit recent speech and language therapist graduates for roles in children's disability network teams and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 43804/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he is taking to encourage speech and language therapists who are Irish nationals working in other jurisdictions to take up roles in children's disability network teams.*

**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. 190 posts were allocated to Children's Disability Services this year. In addition, further to recent discussions with An Taoiseach and relevant Government Ministers, the HSE and its CDNT Lead Agencies will receive funding for an additional 136.3 WTEs to provide services in 104 special schools.

These additional posts along with the 185 posts allocated in 2021 are intended to support the newly established CDNTs to prioritise intervention for children with complex needs as well as those in special schools.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals (e.g., occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, social workers) and others disciplines (e.g., nursing).

Each CDNT is managed by a Lead Agency. Each lead agency is responsible for recruiting staff when vacancies arise on their teams or when development posts are allocated to their teams.

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 and the various Lead Agencies experience ongoing challenges recruiting staff across a range of disciplines and grades.

The HSE continues to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff across all aspects of the health services. In addition, the HSE is working collaboratively with the CDNT Lead Agencies at CHO level to market CDNTs as an employer of choice in a competitive employment market. Each lead agency is responsible for recruitment of staff on their CDNTs and is using a variety of approaches to fill funded vacancies.

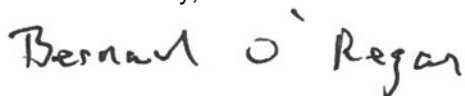
A comprehensive PDS national team development programme has been provided for CDNMs and cascaded to all team members. This programme, which was designed to support the establishment of the new CDNTs and to support the implementation of the new model of service, will also support staff retention.

Options regarding the recruitment of staff including Speech and language therapists for the CDNTs being explored include:

- Targeted National Recruitment for CDNTs
- High profile international campaigns for therapy roles.
- Targeted International Recruitment for CDNTs with the possibility of a relocation allowance
- Sponsorship Programme
- Apprenticeship Programme for therapy grades
- Employment of graduates as therapy assistants as they await CORU registration
- Expansion of therapy assistants in the system with HSE supporting individuals to return to education to qualify as therapists.

The HSE has approved an attractive and competitive relocation package for the international recruitment of all disciplines. The relocation packages include allowances payable to candidates to meet the initial cost for relocating, such as an accommodation and flight allowance for EU/UK candidates and non EU candidates.

Yours Sincerely,



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