



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
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19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Deputy Duncan Smith,  
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Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Smith,

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: 16099/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if staff shortages in section 38 and 39 organisations running CDNT's is similar to the staff shortages in the HSE ran CDNTs; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

The HSE has rolled out ninety one Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) across the country in partnership with HSE funded voluntary organisations to provide equity of access for all children with complex disability to specialised services and supports as close to a child's home as possible. These teams provide for approximately 5.6% of the total child disability population, i.e. over 70,000 children and their families nationally.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work, dietetics 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 190 posts provided in 2022 as well as an additional 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.

The HSE completed its second annual Children's Disability Network Team Staff Census and Workforce Review in October 2022. The resulting report was finalised in February 2023 and has been circulated to relevant stakeholders. (please see copy attached).

An overall analysis of the data from 2021 and 2022 demonstrates an increase of 11% in the number of approved posts and a 2% increase in the CDNT workforce.

This increase has been achieved in a context where there is an average turnover rate 9.6% in health and social care professionals each year.



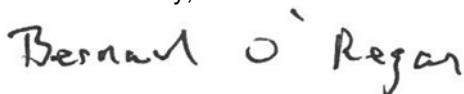
The census indicates over 707 posts vacant out of 2103 at this time across all CDNTs. Disability services, similar to all other areas of the Irish health services are experiencing enormous challenges in recruiting Health and Social Care Professionals (HSCP) at this time.

The table below is taken from the 2022 CDNT Staff Census and gives a summary of provider by CDNT. The largest provider nationally is the HSE where there are 572.94 filled WTE positions and 359.32 vacant WTE positions (932.26 total). The HSE has the highest vacancy rate at 39% which is to be expected as they are the largest employer of staff. S38 Providers have a vacancy rate of 29%. 27% of the CDNT staff are employed by S39 Service Providers which has a vacancy of 31%.

*Table 10: 2022 WTE Allocation by Provider Type*

Provider	Approved WTE	Filled WTE	Vacant WTE	% Filled	% Vacant
HSE	932.26	572.94	359.32	61%	39%
S38	625.93	446.06	179.87	71%	29%
S39	544.43	376.30	168.13	69%	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,102.62</b>	<b>1,395.30</b>	<b>707.32</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>

Yours sincerely,



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

