



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Deputy Denis Naughten,  
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Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Naughten,

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: 17460/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of vacant occupational therapy roles in each children's disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 17624/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of vacant psychology roles in each children's disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 17626/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of vacant speech and language therapy roles in each children's disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 17628/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of vacant physiotherapy roles in each children's disability network team; 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.

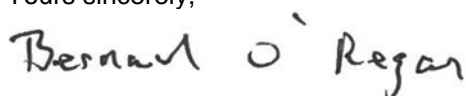
The census indicates over 707 posts vacant out of 2103 at this time across all CDNTs. Disability services, similar to all other areas of the Irish health services are experiencing enormous challenges in recruiting Health and Social Care Professionals (HSCP) at this time.

The table below is taken from the 2022 CDNT Staff Census and gives detailed information regarding the number of vacancies by Discipline including Speech and language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychology and Physiotherapy.

Table 13: 2022 WTE Allocation by Discipline

Discipline	Approved WTE	Filled WTE	Vacant WTE	% Filled	% Vacant
Speech and Language Therapy	447.36	284.55	162.81	64%	36%
Occupational Therapist	404.85	244.57	160.28	60%	40%
Psychologist	333.27	202.59	130.68	61%	39%
Physiotherapist	258.85	160.47	98.37	62%	38%
Social Worker	184.95	132.59	52.36	72%	28%
Administration	153.64	128.76	24.88	84%	16%
Nursing	99.19	70.12	29.07	71%	29%
CDNM	90.00	83.53	6.47	93%	7%
Other	51.01	46.50	4.51	91%	9%
Dietician	27.50	7.90	19.60	29%	71%
Family Support Worker	19.61	13.20	6.41	67%	33%
Socialcare Worker	14.15	8.55	5.60	60%	40%
Care Assistant	7.55	5.12	2.43	68%	32%
Play Therapist	6.16	4.31	1.85	70%	30%
Healthcare Assistant	4.53	2.53	2.00	56%	44%
<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**

