



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

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2nd May 2023

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 17685/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the average time it takes to advertise a post (details supplied) that has been left vacant in children's disability network teams, from the time that the staff member hands in their notice; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details supplied: Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapists.

HSE Response

Retention and Recruitment

The HSE and Lead Agencies are operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. In partnership with our CDNT Lead Agencies, the HSE continues to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff into CDNTs.

The lead agencies and the number of teams they lead are: HSE (41 teams), Enable Ireland (20 teams), Avista (formerly Daughters of Charity - 4 teams) Brothers of Charity (6 teams), Central Remedial Clinic (5 teams), St. Michael's House (4 teams), Cope Foundation (3 teams), St. Gabriel's (2 teams), St. Josephs Foundation (2 teams), Stewarts Care (2 teams), with CoAction West Cork and KARE leading 1 team each.

Each lead agency, is responsible for recruitment of staff on their CDNTs and is using a variety of approaches to fill funded vacancies. Each agency has on-going rolling recruitment to address a range of vacancies including short term temporary posts, full time permanent posts, development posts, part time posts etc.

Options to support the recruitment of staff for the CDNTs currently being progressed include:

- Confined competition to fill all vacant senior posts across all disciplines on CDNTs
- Targeted National Recruitment for CDNTs
- Targeted International Recruitment for CDNTs with an agreed relocation allowance
- Sponsorship Programme for therapy grades



In addition, the following options are being explored:

- 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.
- Increase in the number of clinical placements on CDNTs.

The HSE has launched International Recruitment campaigns for qualified healthcare professionals. To support these international campaigns, the HSE is working in partnership with CORU, the regulator and government departments to maximise this pool. In addition, some of the CDNT Lead Agencies are also progressing International Recruitment.

Of note, there are panels currently in place for occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists.

Within the CHO areas, recruitment is managed locally and the recruitment time from point of vacancy and point of job offer can vary. The length of time it takes to advertise a post varies, however as soon as it is known that a post will become vacant, the necessary documentation to replace the post is completed. In the first instance, vacant positions are circulated out to the existing panels that are in place.

Another key focus of HSE Disabilities is staff retention. A comprehensive Team Development Programme 2020/2021 was provided for Children's Disability Network Managers (CDNMs) and cascaded to all team members. The programme, designed to support establishment of the new teams and implementation of a child and family centred model of services, will also support staff retention. All resources from this programme are now accessible online for CDNT staff. A further CDNT Training and Development Programme 2022/2023 has been launched, with dedicated funding and based on competency gaps identified and prioritised by the teams. A secure online site has been set up for CDNMs and their staff to facilitate sharing of training and development resources as well as clinical and service good practice models in place across the country. The HSE and partner Lead Agencies are committed to providing ongoing training and development for CDNT staff supporting their professional development and retention, and promoting CDNTs as an attractive place to work.

Filling the current staffing vacancies will take time. In the interim, the HSE continues to drive a number of initiatives to reduce waiting times for children and families. These include sourcing therapy assessments and interventions externally via private service providers. This will facilitate the Children's Disability Network Teams to focus on the provision of intervention for children on their caseloads.

The HSE acknowledge that waiting times for CDNT service at this time are not appropriate and particularly stressful for children and their families, and will continue, with its Lead Agencies, to explore and implement progressive strategies to address current recruitment challenges.

The HSE remains committed to the delivery of appropriate services for children with disabilities and will continue to work with families and staff to develop services that meet their needs.

Bernard O'Regan,



**Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**

