

18<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

Mr Thomas Gould, TD.,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ 31631/23**

**“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if he will provide an update on the return of therapists to special schools in Cork.”**

Dear Deputy

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) have been established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) is aware that the reinstatement of health and social care supports in special schools has been identified as a priority. An additional 26.0 posts were allocated to CKCH in 2022 based on the numbers of schools and the whole time equivalents (WTE) *in situ* prior to reconfiguration and commencement of two new special schools in Carrigaline and Rochestown. The lead agencies have commenced the recruitment process for these posts. In the meantime, the teams have provided supports to children as the Children’s Disability Network Team (CDNT) model of service based on a child’s needs and resource availability.

The CDNT’s are supporting special schools in their area with a range of expertise as needed and within resources available. The overall aim in rolling out PDS is to address inequity in the system. Services to children attending special schools, but also all other children on CDNT caseload, will need to grow, informed by individuals risk and needs, not school setting, as staffing improves. There are also very needy children who do not attend special schools. Children attending special schools tend to rank high in order of priority on CDNT internal prioritisation systems and consistently receive a higher level of service. These services are at times delivered on site in school, but on many occasions it is more appropriate to provide service in other settings, such as the family home or a clinic setting.

CKCH received

- a.) 5.8 posts under Minister Rabbittes Special School allocation in 2021.  
4.8WTEs have been filled\* and 1.0WTE Psychology post is still vacant and challenging to fill (see Table 1 below).

*Table 1. Status of 2021 Allocation of Posts to Special Schools*

Discipline	Grade	WTE allocated	WTE filled	Current status	CDNT	Lead Agency
Psychologist	Staff	1.0	1.0		Central Cork CDNT8	Cope
Physiotherapist	Senior	0.5	0.5		Central Cork CDNT8	Cope
OT	Staff	0.5	0.5		Central Cork CDNT8	Cope
Psychologist	Staff	1.0	1.0		South East Cork City CDNT11	Enable

SLT	Staff	1.0	1.0		South East Cork City CDNT11	Enable
Psychologist	Staff	0.8	0.8		West Central Cork CDNT12	Enable
Psychologist	Staff	1.0	0.0	Vacant	Bandon / Carrigaline / Kinsale CDNT13	BOC
<b>Total</b>		<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>			

- b.) 26.0 posts under Minister Rabbittes Special School Allocation in 2022 of which 22.19 are allocated to Cork Special Schools

Table 2 identifies the number of posts allocated, filled\* or at various stages in the recruitment process.

*Table 2. Status of 2022 Allocation of Posts to Special Schools – Cork only*

WTE allocated	Current status	WTE
<b>CKCH 26.0WTE</b>	At Advertisement	8.84
	Interview Pending	0.70
	Job Offer	0.12
	Job Offer Accepted	5.97
	Contract Issued	1.03
	Recruitment Complete	2.58
	Backfills Required	2.60
	Exploring option to increase hours of existing staff	0.35
	Total allocated to Cork Special Schools	<b>22.19</b>

\* Many senior posts have been filled by promotion of staff grades from within CDNTs. These staff grades also now need to be backfilled before you will see an overall increase in numbers within teams. Again it is a challenge to give you a timeline for when posts will be fully available to special schools. Currently CDNTs are supporting special schools with their current staffing complement.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Ms. Majella Daly,  
Head of Disability Services,  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**