

Ms Niamh Smyth T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

26th July 2023

Re: Forwarded PQ ref 32504/23 - Update on plans to increase disability services for children in both Cavan and Monaghan - DSPQ23111

Details

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth to provide an update on disability services for children in both Cavan and Monaghan; if there are plans to increase services in these counties; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Niamh Smyth

Dear Deputy Smyth,

I refer to your recent correspondence in relation to plans to increase disability services for children in both Cavan and Monaghan. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

I can advise that under the Progressing Disability Services Programme for Children & Young People (PDS) that the services for children with disabilities in Cavan and Monaghan reconfigured to two Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) in October 2021. Monaghan CDNT is HSE led and Cavan CDNT is Enable Ireland led. These two identified teams will continue to provide support in Cavan and Monaghan to meet the needs of the children in disability services.

The CDNT Managers have advised that staff shortages are posing a significant challenge in managing the CDNT waiting lists in a consistent manner. There is a high vacancy rate for staff matching the skill sets required in CDNTs across the country, however there is a nationally agreed process in place to support local CDNTs in their efforts to fill vacant posts.

A number of actions are being taken in order to fill the vacant posts in each of the seven CDNTs in Community Healthcare Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo (CH CDLMS) including ongoing engagement with HR. There is a focus on the regrading of therapy posts within the existing services and national, international and bespoke panels are also being utilised in an effort to fill vacant posts.

CH CDLMS Disability Services are continuously reviewing processes and looking at areas where service improvements can be implemented in an effort to try to provide a timely service to every child waiting to access services.

There are a number of internal initiatives within the HSE to combat specific recruitment challenges. The HSE has offered all of the class of 2023 "an opportunity to apply for employment" through the national recruitment campaigns targeting colleges and universities. By the end of 2024, the HSE has targeted the recruitment of over 550 professionals for Children's Disability Services. Additionally HSE HR has been asked to prioritise recruitment to CDNT and CAMHS posts as a priority.



Funding has been provided for additional development posts in CDNTs in recent years to enhance the capacity of Children's Disability Network Teams and to shorten waiting times.

Specific to the Cavan and Monaghan area, there is ministerial support for a request from Enable Ireland for three clinical specialist posts on the Cavan CDNT which requires additional funding. As part of the roadmap to deliver 85 therapy assistant posts nationwide the posts for Cavan CDNT include one Occupational Therapy specialist post, one Speech and Language Therapy specialist post and one Physiotherapy specialist post.

In parallel to other initiatives, funding has been allocated to address waiting lists for clinical assessments identified through the AON process.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edel Quinn', written in a cursive style.

Edel Quinn
Head of Service Disability CHO1
Ceann na Seirbhíse Míchumas
Eagraíocht Chúram Sláinte Limistéar 1