



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
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25th July 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 questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ: 34277/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of clinical placements that have been provided for students within children's disability network teams, by discipline each year since their formation, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

PQ: 34281/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of clinical settings that facilitate student placements within children's disability network teams each year since its formation, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

HSE Response

91 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and are providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age.

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. 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 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. Among the range of options being explored are Student / Clinical Placements.

Student / Clinical Placements.

All CDNTs are required to provide student placement programmes, pending staffing resources in place to support the students. All grades of HSCPs on CDNTs are required to supervise students based on individual staff's experience and competency. With regard to the questions asked, this information is not gathered nationally.

The Roadmap for Service Improvement - Disability Services for Children and Young People 2023 – 2026 awaiting sign off includes the following action of 55 that will be measured and reported on regularly:

3.4	All teams will provide student placements on a pro rata basis to the number of filled posts on their teams.	Sept 2023	Heads of Service Disabilities/Lead Agencies
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Yours Sincerely



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

