

4<sup>th</sup> August, 2023

Mr. Sean Sherlock, TD.,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 35637/23**

**“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the reason school therapists have not started in a school (details supplied); and the date they will start.”**

**Detail Supplied: Carrigaline Community Special School**

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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 Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth 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 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.

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. CDNTs are supporting special schools with their current staffing complement and in the school environment as needed. The following posts have been filled for Carrigaline Special School: Speech & Language (0.33 WTE), Occupational Therapy (0.33 WTE) and Psychologist (0.33 WTE) and these posts are available to support the children with an identified need at the school.

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

Yours sincerely

*Majella Daly*

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

