



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

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
Disability Services/Social Care Division,  
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

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20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Deputy Mairead Farrell,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [mairead.farrell@oireachtas.ie](mailto:mairead.farrell@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Farrell,

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: 27234/22**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if it is his intention to organise work done by speech and language, OT and physio professionals who work with ASD classes around the class as a whole rather than individual students; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

### **HSE Response**

The HSE's National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay, ensures that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs rather than based on diagnosis. Many children with a disability who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream Primary Care health services. This policy provides a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate service, i.e. Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties.

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.

Regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend, every child with complex needs and their families have access to a range of family centred services and supports of their CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes evidence based universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed.

Universal supports are provided by CDNTs for a group of children with disabilities and their families who share the same needs, and are typically delivered through information sessions, talks, and workshops for families on topics such as sleep, toilet training and communications. Targeted supports are provided for needs which some but not all children with disabilities and their families share. Bringing families together with common and shared challenges for group work can be powerful. Examples of evidence based group work with good outcomes include "It takes Two to Talk" for children with language delay, and "More than Words" and "Talkability" for children with autism or social communication disorder. Supports are provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

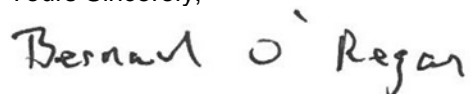


An interdisciplinary team is a number of professionals from different disciplines who work together and share information, decision-making and goal-setting. They have common policies and procedures and frequent opportunities for communication. They work with the family and child, all of whom are seen as part of the team, to meet their identified needs with a joint care and support plan.

CDNTs, in line with national PDS policy, offers services based on the child's individual needs and family priorities as identified in the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) through a family centre practice model.

This model of service ensures that the supports provided are determined from family priorities, taking into account the factors relevant to each child. It recognises that each family has its own role, values, structures, beliefs and coping styles and it aims to strengthen families own abilities in dealing with their child's challenges. This approach is supported by national and international best practice.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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

