



Ceannasaí Seirbhíse do  
Dhaoine Faoi Mhíchumas

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4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Mr Cian O'Callaghan TD,  
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Leinster House,  
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Dublin 2

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**PQ 12431/23** *"To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the action he will take to tackle the waiting lists for necessary children's disability services for example, psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy in the north Dublin area CHO9; the length of the waiting lists for the services; his advice for parents who may be waiting upwards of three years for an initial appointment; his plans to shorten these wait times to ensure children are assessed in a timely manner; and if he will make a statement on the matter"* **Cian O'Callaghan TD**

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you with information in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) in Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) were established on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021. The reconfiguration of children's disability services has been a very significant change management project and has necessitated development of new teams, a new model of service that adheres to national policies and required development of new skill sets and new care pathways.

The CDNTs and Lead Agencies (Central Remedial Clinic, Avista, and St Michael's House) have worked closely together to manage this change process, mitigate risks and promote the new model of service across the 12 CDNTs in CHO DNCC. CDNTs are now providing a new model of service for children with disabilities and their families in CHO DNCC for over 18 months.

The introduction of CDNTs represents an evidence-based fundamental shift to a child and family centred model of care. This model of service sees a family set and achieve their own goals, supported by an interdisciplinary team. The ultimate goal of this approach is to enable children to flourish at home and in their communities. The focus of CDNT service delivery is child and family centred and enabling the child and family to carry out exercises and activities at home that may enhance their family life. In this regard, CDNTs often bring groups of children and groups of parents together to learn new skills and mix with each other in person or through digital platforms, which is convenient for many families in today's world. Family members learn how to support their child's development at home, as part of their everyday life and based on evidence across the world, which has formed the framework of the CDNT working models.

The current number of children awaiting service from a CDNT is 2,986. This is a significant number and should be viewed in the context that all CDNTs are currently experiencing some challenges to service delivery at present. Recruitment to the teams is a particular concern, with a vacancy rate of 40% across CHO DNCC CDNTS. I am working collaboratively with all CDNTs to try to reduce this. We are currently running targeted local and international recruitment campaigns for all grades of staff on the CDNTs. We have also partnered with some third level institutions to target graduates when they complete their studies to work with the CDNTs.

Despite the very high level of vacancy, the teams have opened the cases of an additional 700 children in the past year. In addition many of the CDNTs offer supports through workshops and advice clinics for children and families on their waiting list in effort to provide support and optimise the use of available resources.

Families are also recommended to contact their Children's Disability Network Manager (CDNM) to discuss any urgent concerns they may have regarding their child. Utilising the National Policy on Prioritisation the CDNM may prioritise individuals on the waiting list for a specific intervention or to open the case fully if necessary.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olive Hanley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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**Ms Olive Hanley**  
**Head of Service for Disability**