



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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Office of the Head of Operations,
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9th June 2023

Deputy Peadar Tóibín,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: peadar.toibin@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

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: 29490/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if it is now the policy that children accessing CDNT services are transferred to HSE community services if they have not been seen or have not received an appointment for services for six months; if so, the rationale for this change in policy; and if he will provide a breakdown of the number of children who have been waiting for more than six months for each specialised service, including waiting times, by each CDNT, and each county within each CDNT, in tabular form.

PQ: 29491/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of staff for each specialised support service within each CDNT for each of the past five years.

HSE Response

The National Access Policy to CDNT and Primary Care services

The 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 i.e. Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties. Children may access supports from a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) or from Primary Care depending on the complexity of their needs.

This policy applies to all children with disabilities referred for CDNT or Primary Care services. Children already in service in either Primary Care or CDNT and whose needs change, will also be facilitated to move to the other service (CDNT or PC) where it is determined the more appropriate service to meet their needs as defined in the National Access Policy.



Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)

There are ninety one Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) providing services for children with complex disability needs aged 0 – 18 years.

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 the full range of family centred services and supports of their CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports are provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

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.

Please note that as the 91 CDNTs were only fully established in all areas in 2021, information is not available for the CDNT Staffing levels for the years prior to 2021.

However on 13th October 2021, the HSE undertook a census and workforce review of all staff working in the CDNTs and a review of all vacant posts. Please see the attached 2021 report. The report is an analysis of the validated information returned by all CDNTs nationally in 2021

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. Please see this report attached also for your information.

Both reports provide you with an overview of the CDNT staffing levels by discipline and by CDNT.

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 continues to explore a range of options to enhance the retention and recruitment of essential staff across all aspects of the health services. The HSE is operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. The HSE Community Operations Disability Services is working collaboratively with the CDNT lead agencies at CHO level to promote CDNTs as a workplace of choice in a competitive employment market. Each lead agency is responsible for recruitment of staff on their CDNTs and is using a variety of approaches to fill funded vacancies.

National Information Management System for the CDNTs (CDNTIMS)

Historically the number of children waitlisted for children's disability services provided by section 38 and section 39 providers has not been available nationally.

The establishment of CDNTs has facilitated the collection of this data. A National Management Information System for all 91 CDNTs is being rolled out and when fully implemented, will provide current data on waiting lists and other details for all CDNTs. In the interim, manual data collection is on-going and will provide information to the local areas regarding the number of children waiting for each CDNT.



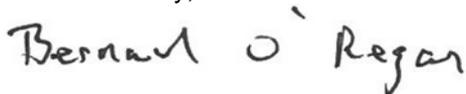
The most recent data available is provided in the table below and shows the number of children that are waiting for an initial contact with a CDNT in the 9 CHO Areas. This Dataset represents end of March 2023 activity reports. Please note that CHO 8 data is end of December 2022*.

The Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) do not collect activity or waiting list data by individual discipline/specialised service, as this does not align with disability services interdisciplinary model of care.

Status report	CHO 1	CHO 2	CHO 3	CHO 4	CHO 5	CHO 6	CHO 7	CHO 8	CHO 9
No of children waiting 0-3 months for an initial contact @month end	402	170	335	150	157	84	133	361*	71
No of children waiting 4-6 months for an initial contact @month end	310	133	224	154	121	112	207	498*	84
No of children waiting 6-12 months for an initial contact @month end	299	202	269	230	282	281	521	367*	304
No of children waiting over 12 months for an initial contact @month end	375	442	377	1303	1399	740	1729	1903*	2428

Please also note that this is an interim dataset as we await the roll out of the National Information Management System and some individual CDNTs indicate that they do not have a system in place to capture this level of activity, therefore there are gaps in data returns for some of the CHO Areas.

Yours sincerely,



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

