



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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23rd November 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: 49095/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if a confined senior grade competition has been finalised within Childrens Disability Network Teams; the number of senior grade posts that have been filled to date from this competition; and the overall number of senior grade posts it is intended to fill from this competition.

PQ: 49096/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of new clinical psychology trainee placement posts that have been established in Childrens Disability Network Teams in 2023.

PQ: 49097/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of student placements in each Childrens Disability Network Team in 2022 and 2023; and the estimated number of student placements in each Childrens Disability Network Team for 2024, in tabular form.

PQ: 49098/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if a Therapy Assistant Programme has been established within Childrens Disability Network Teams.

PQ: 49099/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of administrative staff working in each Childrens Disability Network Team in 2022 and 2023, in tabular form.



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.

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.

Based on the CDNT Staffing Census (Oct 2022), there are over 700 vacant whole time equivalent posts in CDNTs. 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 attached October 2022 CDNT Staffing Census provides information regarding the number of administrative staff working in each Childrens Disability Network Team in 2022.

End of 2023 information is not yet available.

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.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for 45,741 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow.

In addition, substantial work has been undertaken by the HSE to develop a Roadmap for Service Improvement for Disability Services for Children and Young People which was approved by the HSE Board on July 28th and was launched by the Government and the HSE on Tuesday 24th October 2023.

The actions also include a robust suite of CDNT Retention and Recruitment targets, the majority of which are now in train. For example;

- National Team Development Programme (delivery of the 2ND extensive two year programme prioritised by the CDNTs will be completed by Mar '24)
- Online lunchtime staff webinars (on-going monthly)
- Online basecamp account for staff and team managers to share innovative programmes, practices and resources across the country
- Confined Senior grade competition for CDNTs - completed
- Additional 20 Senior clinical psychology trainee placements
- Marketing CDNTs as a workplace of choice
- HSE HR engagement with graduates in person and via webinar
- Recordings of CDNT staff and parents on benefits of working or receiving services from a CDNT, used for recruitment of staff off national panels
- HSE Recruitment, Reform and Resourcing has featured CDNTs on their "Service in the Spotlight", hosted on the HSE Career Hub. The 16,000 individuals now registered on the hub will receive notice of the targeted recruitment campaign for CDNTs and be encouraged to share with family and friends, extending our reach into the market.

The HSE acknowledge the current challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff and work is also progressing to commence the following;



- Student Sponsorship Programmes
- Targeted recruitment campaigns for senior and staff grade therapies will commence in early December 2023 to fill existing vacancies on HSE, S.38 and S.39 Lead Agency teams.

The Roadmap includes a commitment to the provision of 50 Therapy Assistant posts that were approved in August 2023 - 14.5 of these posts have been allocated to specific Children's Disability Network Teams to provide supports into 6 special schools and recruitment is progressing on same. Interim plans are being implemented urgently to provide onsite therapy cover until the Therapy Assistant posts are filled.

The remaining 35.5 are being assigned to CHOs for allocation to specific teams based on a number of factors including current filled therapy posts, and the size and number of special schools in their geographical area.

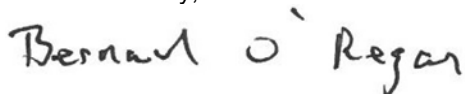
In addition, Minister of State, Anne Rabbitte, has convened a Disabilities Workforce Enhancement Group, including National Disability Operations Team and NCPPD representation, focused on the immediate, medium and long term sustainability of Disabilities workforce, including CDNT.

A confined senior grade competition has been finalised within the Community Healthcare Areas – CDNTs. Information regarding this is currently being gathered.

The HSE has commenced 45 new clinical psychology trainee placements across community health services this year. The HSE will work to market CDNT services to this cohort to encourage both clinical placements and future employment in CDNTs post graduation.

With regard to the number of student placements in each Childrens Disability Network Team, whilst this information is not routinely gathered, data on number of student placements that have been provided per discipline, per CDNT, and their respective university programmes over the past 12 months, is being gathered as a snapshot to inform guidance on the commencement of a student clinical placement programme across all CDNTs.

Yours Sincerely,



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

