



**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.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369  
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Deputy Brendan Howlin,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [brendan.howlin@oireachtas.ie](mailto:brendan.howlin@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Howlin,

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: 43112/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number and location of therapist posts, including speech and language therapists, occupational, psychological and other, appointed to special schools to date in 2023, setting out the CHO areas of each appointment; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

In August 2022, An Taoiseach, Mr Micheál Martin confirmed that the Government requires the HSE and its CDNT lead agencies to restore multidisciplinary health supports in special schools that were present pre setup of the CDNTs. This decision requires CDNTs to dedicate a defined quantum of services to be delivered onsite in specific special schools. An additional 87 whole time equivalent health and social care professional's posts in 2021 and 136 posts in 2022 were approved to deliver the identified services.

The HSE and the voluntary sector Service Providers who are Lead Agencies for some CDNTs have been working to implement this Government decision. While there are significant recruitment challenges which are impacting on fully implementing this decision, there has been progress in providing therapy supports, including:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Psychology
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Social Work

As of August 31<sup>st</sup> 2023, 103 of the above 223 posts allocated have been recruited. An intense and focused recruitment campaign continues.

In terms of the commitment to facilitate the provision of in-reach services to those special schools that have heretofore provided a school based service, to date based on validated, updated information collated for June 2023, 2271.7 therapy hours were provided per week which equates to 65 WTEs in place across the CHO areas providing on-site hours to special schools; Of the 82 Special Schools, 72 received 1 or more therapies onsite in June 2023.



## Special schools Therapists Posts Recruitment Status August 31<sup>st</sup> 2023

58.16 WTE of 87 posts (2021) recruited = 67%

46.19 WTE of 136 therapy posts (2022 allocation) recruited = 34%

**Total recruited: 104.35 of 223.75 = 47%**

### Assistant Therapists on site in Special Schools

The PDS 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 6 special schools and recruitment is progressing on same (see progress in table below). 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.

### Therapists/Therapy Assistants for 6 Special Schools – Update 12.10.23

CHO	Special School	Allocation	Current Status
2	St Oliver's Special School, Tuam	1 WTE Physio Assistant 1 WTE OT Assistant 1 WTE SLT Assistant 0.5 WTE Psychology Assistant has been increased to 1.0 WTE	<p>Physio Assistant: Job Order accepted (At pre clearance). Start date to be agreed following pre-clearance checks including Garda vetting completed.</p> <p>OT Assistant: post offered to panel with no EOI received; new campaign to launch</p> <p>SLT Assistant: no panel in place; campaign to launch</p> <p>Psychology Assistant: post offered to panel with no EOI received; new campaign launched</p> <p><b>Interim clinical supports for this special school:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clinicians from CDNT7 continue to support the children in this school in line with PDS model of support</li> <li>- 1 OT Assistant recruited through agency, with a start date of Oct 16<sup>th</sup></li> <li>- Info on agency OT pending</li> <li>- Unable to source through agency Senior SLT, Senior Physio or Senior Psychologist, SLT Assistant, Physio Assistant or Psychology Assistant. Continuing to link with recruitment agencies re same.</li> </ul>
4	Carrigaline, Rochestown, & Carrigtowhill	1 WTE SLT Assistant 1 WTE OT Assistant 1 WTE Physio Assistant 0.5 WTE Psychology Assistant	<p>Enable Ireland advertised the Therapy Assistants Posts on 28/9/23: Closing Date 9/10/23: Interviews to be held 10/10/23</p> <p>Brothers of Charity advertised the Therapy Assistant Posts on 29/9/23: Closing Date 5/10/23: Interviews to be held week commencing 16/10/23.</p> <p><b>Interim clinical supports :</b></p> <p><u>Carrigaline:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0.33 WTE SLT and 0.33 WTE OT are recruited and a therapist attends Carrigaline Special School onsite, 5 days per week, supporting school staff and environment as well as providing information and advice.</li> <li>- 0.33 Psychologist is at job offer stage of recruitment</li> <li>- In addition therapists from home based teams are supporting children from their team who attend this special school when required as per their Individual Family Supports Plans (IFSP).</li> </ul> <p><u>Rochestown (not yet opened)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0.33wte Senior OT has been recruited, creating a backfill in the CDNT which is in recruitment</li> <li>- 0.33wte Senior SLT job offer accepted</li> <li>- 0.33 Psychologist as advertisement stage</li> </ul> <p>Meeting was held between CDN M and Principal of Rochestown Special School to discuss the model of service and supports required by the school. CDN M advised the Principal that she would identify the goals for CDNT 11 children attached to the school. In addition the CDNT will</p>



			provide school training in the coming months, and will be in contact again with the school to discuss same.
	St Paul's & Scoil Eanna, Montenotte, Cork	1 WTE SLT Therapy Assistant 1 WTE OT Therapy Assistant 1 WTE Physio Therapy Assistant 1 WTE Psychology Assistant	COPE advertised the Therapy Assistant posts on 27/9/2023. Closing Date: 11/10/23. In addition, the following posts have been accepted and awaiting a start date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 WTE SLT</li> <li>- 1.5 WTE OT</li> <li>- 1 WTE SW</li> <li>- 0.5 Nurse</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Interim clinical supports :</u></b>  All available therapists are allocated to open pathways and children are seen, informed by criteria of the National Prioritisation Policy. Intervention is planned in the most appropriate setting, e.g. school, home, therapy premises, in line with each child's IFSP.  Provision to St Pauls includes: Postural management, FEDS, urgent and Priority 1 communication needs. Provision to St Eanna's includes: Training planned for academic year, children seen 1:1 in order of prioritisation.</p>
7	Our Lady of Hope Special School, Crumlin	1 WTE SLT Therapy Assistant 1 OT Therapy Assistant 1 Physio Therapy Assistant 0.5 Psychology Assistant	<b>As of Sept 25<sup>th</sup>:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 WTE OT Assistant and 0.5 WTE Psychology Assistant commenced via agency on Sept 25<sup>th</sup> and are currently completing employer and CDNT induction and Garda vetting.</li> <li>- Therapy Assistant is being interviewed Sept 26<sup>th</sup> for SLT Assistant role.</li> <li>- PT Assistant is due back in Ireland mid October to commence on the team for this special school.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Interim clinical supports :</u></b>  Interim Head of Service Disabilities, commenced Sept 25<sup>th</sup>, is sourcing interim onsite therapy supports for OLH from other CDNTs in the CHO until above staff have completed their inductions.</p>

Yours Sincerely,

*Bernard O'Regan*

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

