

9th February, 2024

Deputy Thomas Gould,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 44000/23

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for an update on the return of therapists to a facility (details supplied).”

Detail Supplied: Cara Junior National School in Cork

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) have been established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) is aware that the reinstatement of health and social care supports in special schools has been identified as a priority.

An additional 26.0 posts were allocated to CKCH in 2022 based on the numbers of schools and the whole time equivalents (WTE) in situ prior to reconfiguration and commencement of two new special schools in Carrigaline and Rochestown. In August 2023 7.5 therapy assistant posts were allocated to five special schools in Cork. All of these posts are to be recruited by the Lead Agency managing the CDNT in the area. This recruitment is on-going. In the meantime, the teams have provided supports to children based on their needs and resource availability.

CDNTs were established to address inequity in the system. Services for all children with complex disability needs will be enhanced as staffing improves. Importantly, many children with complex needs do not attend special schools. Each CDNT is supporting special schools in their area from within the resources available. Children attending special schools tend to rank high in order of priority on CDNT internal prioritisation systems and consistently receive a higher level of service. These services are at times delivered on site in school, however on many occasions it is more appropriate to provide services in other settings, such as the family home or a clinic setting. This is in line with the model of care for CDNTs.

Cara Junior School is aligned to East Cork City Children’s Disability Network Team (CDNT 7). The CDNT was allocated 3.72 posts between Cara Junior School and Scoil Triest and the following table outlines the status of recruitment in relation to same.

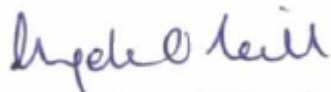
Table 2: Posts assigned to CDNT 7 to work with Special Schools in its geographical area

CDNT	Special School	Discipline	Grade	WTE allocated	WTE filled	WTE Vacant
East Cork City CDNT 7	Cara Junior School	Physiotherapist	Senior	0.06	0.06	
	Cara Junior School	Occupational Therapist	Senior	0.3	0.3	
	Cara Junior School	Speech & Language Therapist	Senior	0.5	0.5	
	Cara Junior School	Psychologist	Senior	0.5		0.5
	Cara Junior School	Social Worker	Senior	0.25	0.25	
	Scoil Triest	Physiotherapist	Senior	0.06	0.06	
	Scoil Triest	Occupational Therapist	Senior	0.6	0.6	
	Scoil Triest	Speech & Language Therapist	Senior	0.6		0.6
	Scoil Triest	Psychologist	Senior	0.6	0.6	
	Scoil Triest	Social Worker	Senior	0.25	0.25	
			Total	3.72	2.62	1.1*

*Recruitment for unfilled posts is ongoing with the lead agency, Brothers of Charity.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Angela O' Neill
Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

