



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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7th November 2023

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 46634/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children on day service waiting lists, that is, waitlists for children with disabilities who are waiting on speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychology services, by CHO and by wait length, in tabular form.

HSE Response

The National Access Policy

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 with ASD may access supports from a Children's Disability Network Team or from Primary Care depending on the complexity of their needs.

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.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team works closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities.

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 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.

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 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 in 2021 has facilitated the collection of this data. A National Management Information System for all 91 CDNTs is being rolled out and when 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.

As historical data is not available, the table below is the most recent data available. This 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 August 2023 activity reports.

In line with the Progressing Disability Services model it is important to note that as the CDNTs are a Multidisciplinary service, information is not collated for individual disciplines/services.

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	123.00	165.00	303.00	144.00	104.00	104.00	112.00	377.00	92
No of children waiting 4-6 months for an initial contact @month end	132.00	140.00	295.00	127.00	88.00	101.00	201.00	401.00	79
No of children waiting 7-12 months for an initial contact @month end	97.00	119.00	308.00	224.00	232.00	196.00	355.00	505.00	196
No of children waiting over 12 months for an initial contact @month end	98.00	407.00	431.00	834.00	1496.00	903.00	1820.00	1064.00	2506

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,



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

