



**Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,**  
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,  
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,  
Àras Phlásóg na Rós, Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile,  
Páirc Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta,  
Caladh an Treoigh,  
Luimneach.

**Office of the Assistant National Director,**  
National Disability Team,  
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,  
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,  
National Technology Park,  
Castletroy,  
Limerick.

7<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Deputy Pauline Tully,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie](mailto: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 question, which was submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 17463/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the current costs of filling all vacant posts in children's disability network teams; the number of vacant posts in children's disability network teams where funding is already committed; the number of vacant posts in children's disability network teams where funding has not already been committed; and the current costs of filling the vacant posts where funding has not already been committed.*

**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.

The total number of approved WTE for the CDNTs is 2,102.62 which represents an increase of 210.24 WTE (11%) from 2021. There are 1,395.30 filled WTE, of which 1,183.01 are in a therapy / clinical role. There are 707.32 vacancies across the 91 teams. Any vacant post on CDNT has a funding source.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for over 46,000 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow. However, there are significant challenges for CDNTs including:

- Significant staffing vacancies
- Growth in numbers of children with complex need requiring services and supports of a CDNT
- Growth in demand for Assessment of Need, diverting further therapeutic resources away from interventions.



## Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People

The HSE's Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People was approved by the HSE Board on July 28th and launched by the Government and the HSE on Tuesday 24th October 2023.

The Roadmap is a targeted Service Improvement Programme to achieve a quality, accessible, equitable and timely service for all children with complex needs as a result of a disability and their families.

It sets out the overall aim for Children's Disability Services, provided by the HSE and its partner agencies, for every child to have a childhood of inclusive experiences where they can have fun, learn, develop interests and skills, and form positive relationships with others in a range of different settings.

As mentioned above, 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.

The Roadmap actions includes a robust suite of 60 actions, including 21 on CDNT Retention and Recruitment targets, and many of which are now in train.

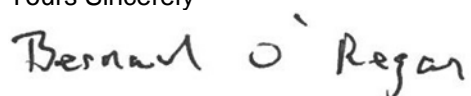
Due to the recent Forsa Industrial Action, work on the CDNT Staffing Census 2023 was delayed. This will be available in due course.

The Roadmap actions will optimise the use of existing budgets including time-related savings whilst additional funding requirements outlined below will be progressed through the Estimates and budgetary processes. Additional capital and infrastructural requirements will be informed by development of the CDNTs National Capital Plan by Q1 2024 (Action 2.17).

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| <p><b>2023 Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• €11m (Budget 2023) to implement the Special Schools initiative</li><li>• Additional €11.5m to implement the Waiting List Initiative to provide diagnostic assessments for those children on waiting lists</li></ul> | <p><b>2024 Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• €6.0m for additional 78 WTE paediatric posts to Primary Care CHNs to build service capacity to meet the needs of children with disabilities with non-complex need)</li><li>• Funding to drive the Roadmap Service Improvement Programme<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Service Improvement Lead</li><li>• 9 CHO Service Improvement Leads</li></ul></li></ul> |
| <p><b>2025 Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2025), half year costs*</li><li>• €12.5m for 300 Therapy Assistant posts*</li></ul>  | <p><b>2026 Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2025), full year costs*</li><li>• €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2026) half year costs* (FYC requires additional 12.55m in 2027)</li></ul>  |

\* This is a critical part of a two and half year commitment over 2023 – 2026 to enhancing the staffing levels on CDNTs to meet the needs of children and families.

Yours Sincerely



**Bernard O'Regan**  
Assistant National Director  
National Disability Team

