

7th May, 2024

Mr. Colm Burke, TD
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 18262/24

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth to provide an update on the return of essential therapists including a psychologist, an occupational therapist, a speech and language therapist, play/behaviour therapists, and social worker to a special school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Detail Supplied: St. Killians School, Old Youghal Road, Mayfield, Cork T23 NV96. Roll No. 19410A.

Dear Deputy Burke,

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 disability needs within a defined geographic area. The Government has prioritised the reinstatement of health and social care supports in special schools. In that regard, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) is continuing to engage with its CDNT lead agencies to progress this work.

St. Killian’s Special School is aligned to Children’s Disability Network Team CDNT 8 which has a caseload of 563.

Table 1: Special Schools in CDNT 8 geographical area

School	Number of Children Enrolled	CDNT	No of Children in CDNT
St. Killian’s Special School	70	8	563

The following tables outline the allocation of posts to Special Schools attached to CDNT 8 in 2021 and 2022 and 0.16WTE remain to be filled.

Table 2. Status of Posts Allocated to Special Schools - CDNT 8 St. Killians

Lead Agency	Discipline	WTE allocated	WTE filled	WTE Vacant
COPE Foundation	Psychologist	0.20	0.10	0.10
	Physiotherapist	0.21	0.15	0.06
	Occupational Therapist	0.20	0.20	0.00
	Speech Language Therapist	0.10	0.10	0.00
	Social Worker	0.10	0.10	0.00
	Nurse	0.05	0.05	0.00
Total		0.86	0.70	0.16

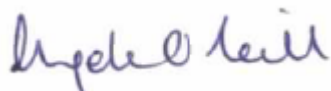
The HSE and its Section 38 and Section 39 Lead Agencies are operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. This is impacting on full delivery of targeted hours to special schools.

CDNTS services in Cork have an average vacancy rate of 23%, with some CDNTs experiencing higher vacancy rates than others. When maternity leave and other statutory leave is included this rate increases to 32%.

A targeted national recruitment campaign has been undertaken to recruit to CDNT vacancies across the country. Lead agencies in this area are currently finalising the appointment of staff recruited through this campaign.

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

