



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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30th January 2024

Deputy Sorca Clarke,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: sorca.clarke@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ: 57355/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated cost of resourcing supports for students with SEN, including proper access to therapeutic supports in mainstream schools and reducing waiting times for assessments, in tabular form.

PQ: 57358/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated cost of establishing an initial panel of 200 speech and language therapists for schools as a shared resource.

HSE Response

91 CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for 45,741 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
- Growth in demand for Assessment of Need, diverting further resources away from interventions.

Significant work is ongoing to improve Childrens' Disability Services.

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.

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.

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.

In addition, Working Group 5: **Engagement with Education and Support for Special Schools** is tasked with implementing the recommendations of the *Collaborative Working between Education and Health Protocol* and in addition, working collaboratively to optimise health and education integration for the benefit of children with disabilities. The recruitment target of 300 Therapy Assistants over the next 2 and ½ years to work on CDNTs will also support children onsite in special schools with additional needs arising from their disability.

The Roadmap actions also include a robust suite of CDNT Retention and Recruitment targets, the majority of which are now in train. An intense and focused recruitment campaign to fill the remaining posts continues.

With regard to costs, the Roadmap actions will optimise the use of existing budgets including time-related savings whilst additional funding requirements outlined below is progressed through the Estimates and budgetary processes.

2023 Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• €11m (Budget 2023) to implement the Special Schools initiative• Additional €11.5m to implement the Waiting List Initiative to provide diagnostic assessments for those children on waiting lists	2024 Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• €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)• Funding to drive the Roadmap Service Improvement Programme<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Service Improvement Lead• 9 CHO Service Improvement Leads
2025 Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2025), half year costs*• €12.5m for 300 Therapy Assistant posts*	2026 Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2025), full year costs*• €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2026) half year costs* (FYC requires additional 12.55m in 2027)

* 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.

With regard to establishing a panel of Speech and language therapists, please see the attached document with is the most recent Consolidated Salary Scales (October 2023) for all HSE and S38 disciplines and staff and grades of staff. Information pertaining to SLTs are on page 21.

The salary of an SLT at mid point of pay is currently €50,312.

The all-in fully burdened salary costs of employing staff is calculated using the mid-point of the pay scales. From this, an average annual fully burdened salary is calculated (i.e. including average premium and employers PRSI) for the grade and position noted.

Please see the attached document, *“Public Spending Code - Central Technical References and Economic Appraisal Parameters”*. This Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) publication contains a framework for estimating staffing costs (section 2; pg.7). This formula is provided on the basis that the central economic appraisal parameters are in place to ensure that there is consistency across the analysis being conducted such as Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) and Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA).



In addition to the pay costs and with regard to the establishment of panels, it is reasonable to assume that there are other non-pay costs associated with the recruitment process i.e. advertising, interview boards, possible travel expenses etc. which would also be incurred.

Yours Sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan

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

