



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Áras 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.

31st July 2024

Deputy Marian Harkin,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: marian.harkin@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Harkin,

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: 32758/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for a breakdown of the staff numbers and grade of CDNTs nationally, in the years 2021, 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ: 32764/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the staff vacancy rate for CDNTs currently in counties Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Donegal, and nationally; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The attached CDNT Staff Census and Workforce Review 2023 gives a picture of the staff working in our children's disability teams on October 11th 2023. An industrial relations process impacted the return of data captured in October 2023 and delayed publication of the report.

The 2023 census and workforce review shows,

- Total number of filled whole time posts - 1,437 up 3% on last year
- Total number of filled therapy posts - 1,179
- Total number of vacancies nationally at 11/10/23 - 817.23



Year	Total approved whole time posts	% Increase year on year	Total filled whole time posts	% Increase year on year	No of therapy posts
2023	2,255	7%	1,437	3%	1179
2022	2,102	10%	1,395	2%	1183
2021	1,892		1,367		1173

During 2021, reconfiguration of Children's Disability services, under the Progressing Disability Services model, took place with the establishment of ninety-one Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) to provide equity of access for all children with complex disability to specialised services and supports as close to a child's home as possible.

The first step for all areas was the reconfiguration of existing staff resources into CDNTs. The staffing mix available in each area was influenced by the historical development of services. For example, some areas may have had a significant number of nurses available for reconfiguration, others may have family support workers or early educators.

Currently, 93 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 CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for 46,595 (End of June BIU metrics) 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.

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 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's *Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People*, launched in October 2023, now in implementation phase, 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.

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

Retention and recruitment

The HSE and disability providers continue to focus on staff retention and recruitment. There is an acknowledged national and international shortage of health and social care professionals with the necessary qualifications and experience. Seven of the disciplines working in children's disability teams have been included on the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Critical Skills Occupations List*. Despite this challenge the HSE and partner disability organisations have increased the capacity of CDNTs by 3%. There has been further net growth across the Disability services in 2024.

Jobs are being actively offered to candidates. To support interest in these roles, staff from the CDNTs delivered a series of webinars in July, to help prospective employees learn about the roles we're offering, inter-disciplinary team working and the children and families we support. There was large attendance from Ireland and abroad.

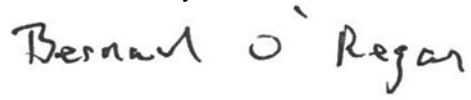
The HSE Careers Hub is highlighting working in Children's Disability Network Teams. The HSE is actively engaging with undergraduates through the Higher Education Institutes, spotlighting disability roles in career and recruitment fairs and generating future interest in working in the disability services with outreach into secondary schools.



The number of clinical placements in CDNTs has been increased and will continue to grow to encourage health and social care undergraduates to choose a job in children's disability services post- graduation.

The HSE with the partner voluntary agencies are developing new disciplines to optimise workforce potential with access to these roles pitched at lower entry level and opportunities to pursue further education in an apprenticeship model.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Bernard" and last name "Regan" clearly legible, and "O'" written as a small circle between them.

Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

