



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,
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25th June 2024

Deputy Patrick Costello,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: patrick.costello@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Costello

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: 26199/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth to provide an update in relation to the HSE's Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026 for Disability Services for Children and Young People; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

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, approved by the HSE Board and launched by the Government and the HSE in October 2023 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.

Two industrial actions, one relevant to CDNT staff and another to Administration and Management, impacted significantly on its implementation until they were stepped down in January and February 2024 respectively. This released the HSE to progress to implementation.



The Roadmap, now in its implementation phase, has established four Working Groups which report into a Service Improvement Programme Board every month which in turn reports to the Roadmap Oversight Group chaired by the Minister of State, Ann Rabbitte.

The WGs have wide membership including HSE, Section 38 and 39 front line disabilities staff and management, parent voices, staff reps, Primary Care, CAMHS and Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth. The WGs have agreed their Terms of Reference and their Project Charters for the Roadmap Actions within their scope.

These Charters define:

- Key activities to be delivered in order to achieve their Roadmap Actions
- Risks
- Assumptions,
- Interdependencies/dependencies
- Deliveries.

Working Group 1 **Integrated Children's Services** – has responsibility for the implementation of National Access Policy, Equity of Access to Aids and Appliances across all CHOs; and the Review of HSE Tusla Joint Protocol.

Working Group 2: **Service Access and Improvement** – has responsibility for Waitlist Management and Services; Optimising Teams Efficiencies, Effectiveness and Governance; AONs overdue for completion; and the development of a National Capital plan to enable all staff of a CDNT to be co-located.

Working Group 3: **Workforce** – has responsibility for developing a recruitment strategy for all CDNTs regardless of the Lead Agency; Retention of existing CDNT staff; Deployment of Students/Trainees/New Graduates; and Development of Existing Staff.

Working Group 4: **Communication and Engagement** – has responsibility for developing a rolling Communication Plan for the Roadmap and CDNT service, which is a key priority; Staff Engagement, including CHO Roadmap Engagement and Workshop days; and Enhancement of Information for Families (and Staff).

A 5th group: will focus on optimising integration between Education and Health and support for special schools. Discussions are ongoing between DCEDIY and Department of Education in regard to its set up and shared leadership.

The Roadmap contains 60 actions of which 12 have been completed, 3 are on hold due to the recruitment pause, and the majority of remaining actions are in train. These include a robust suite of 21 staff retention and recruitment actions.

Please see Appendix 1 attached -Summary of Roadmap Actions.

A targeted recruitment campaign for health and social care professionals to work in Children's Disability Network Teams ran in Quarter 1 with fifty-five professionals joining the teams to date. Key learning from this is being gathered to inform further campaigns. Other actions in train include:

- Recruitment campaign for Therapy Assistants to work in the CDNTs is being finalised to launch
- Existing panels of new graduates are being offered CDNT posts and a series of webinars on CDNTs are scheduled for July.
- Universities are being targeted to highlight the work and rewards of working on a children's Disability Network Team
- A student sponsorship programme will be available for 3rd and 4th year students of Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Social Work, Nursing and Dietetics from September 2024.
- Student placements on CDNTs are being increased by nearly 50% for the incoming academic year, as an incentive for them to return to CDNT work post qualification



- The HSE is working with CORU to support their work on expediting the registration process which is slowly decreasing as incoming applications are now more complete.

Yours Sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan

Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team



Appendix 1: Summary of Roadmap Actions

Completed Roadmap Actions (9):

1.4	National Service Improvement Lead was appointed in September.
2.5	Review of the individual Family Support Plan and Guidance was completed and reissued for CDNTs.
2.18	Interim Clinical Guidance on Assessment of Need for staff was issued July 2023 with a webinar.
2.20	AON Tender process was completed this month - 2 successful applicants, limited additional capacity. Further possible options being explored with Procurement, to build additional capacity.
2.22	Task Group has commenced to review any outstanding issues for assessment following launch of the Interim Clinical Guidance on AON with submission for CCO approval target by Aug 2024
3.1	Confined Senior Grade competition was completed last summer.
3.18	National CDNT Training Programme 2022/2023 was delivered at a cost of €700k.
4.1	Engagement with Inclusion Ireland, DFI and parent representatives on supporting Lead Agencies setting up their Family Forums (FF) and Family Representative Groups (FRG) has concluded.
4.3	Four webinars were delivered for CDNMs and Independent Facilitators of FFs and FRGs to spread the early learning and critical success factors for successful events. FFs are proving challenging for all to sustain and to achieve their intended purpose and we have commissioned an independent review by Genio.

Actions in place and ongoing (12):

1.1	Interdepartmental Oversight Group is holding its 3 rd meeting on May 2 nd .
1.2	The Service Improvement Programme Board convened in February and is meeting monthly.
1.3	Community Operations Childrens Integrated Services Group convened in March and meeting monthly to drive implementation of National Access Policy and Primary Care, Disability CAMHS Joint Protocol.
2.1	CHOs have confirmed they are optimising use of voluntary and private provision with time related savings.
2.2	CHOs/Lead Agencies have confirmed their optimal use of digital tools for online appointments. WG2 intends to drive a standardised approach nationally in use of digital tools to maximise efficiencies.
2.3	Redeployment of staff to cover critical staffing gaps where feasible is in place in critical conditions only.
2.4	Ongoing national supports for teams in sharing good practice and driving child and family centred practice development continue via staff lunchtime webinars and CDNMs online events.
2.6	CDNT Metrics are collated monthly and shared with WGs, SIP Board and DCEDIY.
2.21	DCEDIY held its 2 nd of 4 workshops with staff and other stakeholders on rebalancing AON and service demands. The next will include families.
3.17	HSCP targeted recruitment campaign launched in Jan for Dietitians, OTs, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Speech Language Therapists and Social Workers. As of Apr 8 th , 151 job offers were made.
3.19	Business case for 3 rd National CDNT Training Programme 2024/5 for €700k was approved
4.9	3 interactive CHO Roadmap Engagement and Workshop days were delivered. Further workshops, as the need is identified by WGs, will be delivered.

Actions in progress (25):

1.5	Review of HSE Tusla Joint Protocol has commenced with each agency completing an internal review of its staffs' perspective on its implementation to date
2.7	Approved Service Providers Framework: Application and review process is now completed, and the final outcome agreed with Minister of State. Expected publication date next week.
2.9	CHOs developing Service Improvement Plans with SMART actions aligned to all CHO led Roadmap actions
2.10	Hosting Primary Care, Disability, CAMHS workshop on integrated plan for implementation of National Access Policy and Joint Protocol: Integrated Childrens Services WG has prioritised evaluation of existing data including staff feedback on good practice to inform format of CHO Workshops.
2.12	Heads of Service to lead delivery of Actions 2, 3, 4, 5,6 agreed with Lead Agencies under Reviews of Interagency Agreement and CDNT Governance Policy under CHO Service Improvement Plan.
2.15	47 CDNTs have now migrated to the CDNTIMS, 2 HSE teams scheduled for May, and final HSE team on hold due to staff vacancies. Remaining 41 HSE funded Lead Agency teams on hold due to a legal issue to be resolved. See attached CDNTIMS Update as requested.
2.17	The NDA Review Terms of Reference was agreed with the Minister of State and DCEDIY last week. Once FORSA confirms their acceptance, the 12-month review will commence.
2.19	Five AON Administrative Hubs and 3 AON Assessment hubs have been set up to date. Further work is required to the RHAs when set up and to standardise their approach.
2.23	CHO AON targets to address overdue AONs to be included in CHO Service Improvement Plans



3.2	45 new clinical psychology trainee places commenced in Sept '23, with a further 45 in Sept '24 and in 3.17Sept '25 for all healthcare settings. Disabilities will develop additional traction strategy to optimise their uptake in disability services.
3.3	230 student placements provided in CDNTs for 2022/2023 academic year. Minimum target of 1 student per 2 WTE HSCPs in post on CDNTs is set for incoming academic year, increasing total number nationally by 42% from 230 to 326 minimum as a recruitment and retention strategy.
3.4	HSE HR working with DOH on no. of grade codes to facilitate employment in health service whilst awaiting CORU reg.
3.5	CHOs 3 & 4 are developing an SOP for onboarding and embedding TAs safely and optimally into CDNTs
3.7	CHOs Service Improvement Plans in development – template include CHO's CDNT Retention Plan
3.12	Some of 6 Clinical Specialists/CHO approved in 2022/23 are filled, others are in derogation process
3.13	50 Therapy Assistants allocated to CHOs for recruitment in Sept'23. Further 125 are due to be allocated this month. TAs recruitment campaign to launch end of May
3.15	Tusla working with HSE and UCC have developed 1 st social work apprenticeship programme to go live in 2024 with 12 apprentices to the HSE, a template for other HSCP professions.
3.16	NCPPD is working with NCPPN to fill 3 Paediatrician posts with 80% community based to bridge existing CDNT service gaps.
3.20	HSE HR is working with CORU to streamline process for international candidates for employment.
3.21	HSE HR is collaborating with HEIs on increasing 3 rd level HSCP programme capacity to meet service demands and to increase Therapy Assistant grades through FETAC programmes.
4.2	WG 4 Communications and Engagement has prioritised development of a robust and continuous communication plan.
4.5	85 of 91 Family Forums in place.
4.7	6 of 9 Family Representative Groups in place. Note: Independent review of FFs and FRGs commissioned from Genio on their functionality and sustainability.
5.1	72.95 of the 136.4 WTE HSCP posts have been recruited as of Feb '23 and a total of 8,235 therapy hours delivered in special schools that month equating to 235 WTE.
5.2	Whilst a National HSE/NCSE/NEPS Steering Group is in place a number of years to implement the Framework for Collaborative Working between Education and Health, AND - Disabilities is engaging with NCSE, Education and NEPS colleagues to agree structure and TOR for proposed extension of this group.

Actions on hold (4):

2.11	First intervention for waitlisted children and families until other key activities are implemented first.
3.6	Recruitment of vacant CDNT Admin posts on hold due to recruitment pause.
3.14	National Psychology Placement Office on hold due to recruitment pause.
4.4	First Intervention Guidance for CDNTS to support standardised approach on hold – in line with 2.11.

Actions not commenced (10):

2.8	Service Improvement Function enhancement by National Childrens Disabilities Team.
2.13	Review of access to aids and appliances nationally – now to be undertaken by the WHO as part of an international Digital and Assistive Technology initiative.
2.14	Alignment of the remaining small number of CDNTs fully to CHN boundaries.
2.16	Capital plan development to ensure CDNT staff are collocated, a prerequisite to family centred services.
3.8	Student sponsorship programme.
3.9	Explore viability of 4 years' salary over 5 for new graduates to facilitate a career break in year 5.
3.10	Launch programmes to support i) therapy assistants in CDNTs return to education to qualify as therapists, ii) eligible staff to apply for Masters to qualify as therapists, iii) Return to Work incentivised programmes for recent retirees.
3.11	CHO Lead for driving Service Improvement Programme across the CHO and its Lead Agencies.
4.6	Review the HSE Website with stakeholders to provide families, staff and others with accessible information on services available and resources to assist them in supporting their child.
4.8	Survey Family Representative Groups on their experience of implementation of the Roadmap every 6 months.

