



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
Treoiigh, 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.

13th May 2025

Deputy Rory Hearne,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: rory.hearne@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Hearne,

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: 19045/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for health the current number of vacancies in CDNT teams nationally, by CHO, and by occupation, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

Children's Disability Network Teams vacancies are reported on through a workforce force survey to capture the full workforce across the HSE, Section 38 and Section 39 funded teams. The survey captures staffing levels across various disciplines and grades, providing a snapshot of the workforce across 93 teams. The latest Children's Disability Network Teams workforce survey available was conducted on 16th October 2024.

This survey demonstrated an overall national increase of an additional 17% in staffing in Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) workforce. This is a reduction on the 2023 vacancy rate of 29%. This is a welcome and needed increase, however there is an acute need for sustained improvement in the workforce profile to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families and to address the lengthy waiting lists for services.

As of 16/10/24 there were 1,866 posts filled in CDNTs and there were 529.77 posts vacant. Please find attached a table giving the number of vacancies and number of filled roles in each former CHO as of 16/10/24. In 2025, the HSE will report at Regional Health Area level.

While the CDNTs have made improvements in service delivery due to the increase of 272+ WTE in the CDNT workforce in 2024, ongoing efforts to address workforce challenges are essential to sustain and enhance the quality of care provided in response to growing unmet need for children with disabilities.

To address the high vacancy rate during 2025 there are sustained workforce recruitment and retention initiatives which include:

- Intensive recruitment efforts across the HSE, Section 38s and Section 39s to on-board staff into vacant jobs.
- Recruitment efforts are bolstered by optimising access to relevant applicant pools: the opening up of HSE panels, HSE advertising streams and candidate pools (CareerHub 40k+ registered applicant pools) to CDNTs in the Section 38s and Section 39s – this gives a substantial expansive boost in advertising and engagement into targeted applicant pools.

Tailored approaches to attract and retain CDNT staff are being developed and implemented at a multi- agency level to build and recruit a pipeline of talent for CDNTs. These initiatives include active and sustained engagement with the employment market and students to improve the perception of



and interest in working in CDNTs- boosted by an increase in clinical placements in CDNTs and the development of pipeline initiatives to map relevant applicant pools directly into CDNT jobs.

- To boost recruitment by improving the perception of working in Disabilities and CDNTs, there is sustained outreach and engagement: Multiple engagements to secondary schools, Higher Education Institutes, international applicants representing wider HSE, Section 38s and Section 39s. CDNTs are also spotlighted as a career destination in the upcoming Disabilities Virtual Career Fair taking place on 15th May.
- A CDNT Graduate Sponsorship initiative is currently live to incentivise new graduates eligible for CORU registration in 2025 to take up jobs in CDNTs. A webinar took place on 7th May with professionals from CDNTs and the new graduates to give an insight into working in a CDNT. This webinar was received very positively by the surveyed graduates. These initiatives serve to positively influence the perception of and interest in working in a CDNT.

These activities form part of an ongoing suite of initiatives to populate vacancies, increase retention and improve the capacity to deliver services in Children's Disability Network Teams.

The HSE is operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent. There are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. Seven of the disciplines working in Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) have been included on the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Critical Skills Occupations List.

Health & Social Care Professionals training places in Higher Education Institutes have increased with a growth in clinical placements in Children's Disability Network Teams- this serves to improve recruitment of Health & Social Care Professionals into Children's Disability Network Teams. Tertiary programmes are also being developed for Health & Social Care Professionals to increase the pathways into Disability services.

Within recruitment, there is a particular focus on Irish trained overseas applicants and international recruitment with a relocation package marketed to Irish trained Health & Social Care Professionals who have travelled overseas.

The HSE and funded agencies are focused on identifying barriers to workforce growth and putting in place corrective retention and recruitment initiatives. These initiatives have led to the above described marked growth in CDNT staffing levels in 2024, particularly in Health & Social Care Professionals roles.

The CDNT vacancy rate remains high and intensive work will continue in 2025 to bolster CDNT services through ensuring there are sufficient team members on CDNTs.

The HSE remains dedicated to supporting CDNTs so that children with disabilities receive the comprehensive and individualised support which they deserve.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Aoife O'Donohue,
Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúntóir, Seirbhísí Mhíchumas, Rochtain agus Imeascadh,
Assistant National Director, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination,
Access & Integration

16/10/24 CDNT: Filled WTE & Vacant WTE - CHO Level

CHO1	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total
Filled WTE	3.5	26.6	25	12.8	15.03	9.5	18.83	19.9	8	12.3	151.46
Vacancies WTE	1.7	7.1	12.4	9.9	8.1	4	2.8	3	0	7.65	56.65

CHO2	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	7	34.76	53.4	27.95	29.46	17.61	7.89	25.46	9	27.4	239.93
Vacancies WTE	0	4	2	6.8	3.53	2	0.6	3	0	4.5	26.43

CHO3	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	0	29.91	28.7	24.6	17.06	17.4	4.04	19.54	7	26.13	174.38
Vacancies WTE	2	3.7	6	4.9	2.6	1.6	1.92	1	1	1.75	26.47

CHO4	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	2	54.34	68.74	40.61	30.32	30.22	13.85	28.13	13	34.59	315.8
Vacancies WTE	1.5	8.14	8.9	9.1	3.68	3.5	2.2	1.2	1	26.05	65.27

CHO5	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	3.2	24.57	30.71	14.34	13.65	17.83	9.94	18.91	11.5	0	144.65
Vacancies WTE	5.5	17	21	15.08	11.99	3.27	2.7	1	0	9	86.54

CHO6	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	0.4	25.49	22.26	20.88	18.8	12.2	7.82	17.46	7	10.93	143.24
Vacancies WTE	0.7	16.1	17.39	9.84	6.62	4.9	0.8	0	0	1.11	57.46

CHO7	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	0.6	44.29	49.02	35.7	26.65	18.87	5.74	16.53	11	14.62	223.02
Vacancies WTE	0.7	21.62	17.4	14.9	5.8	7.8	0.5	1	0	4	73.72

CHO8	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	2.1	42.18	52.91	33.26	23.63	19	15.84	26.1	11	9.9	235.92
Vacancies WTE	0.5	23.56	19.99	14.3	10.87	3	3	0.4	1	6.3	82.92

CHO9	Dietician	Occupational Therapy	Speech & Language Therapy	Psychology	Physiotherapy	Social Work	Nursing	Administration	CDNT Manager	Other/Patient & Client Care	Total Vacancies
Filled WTE	2.1	40.73	38.93	34.55	25.5	31.6	11.99	26.9	12	13.6	237.9
Vacancies WTE	1	11.78	13.3	9.5	11.99	1.5	0.6	1	0	3.64	54.31