



General Manager of Children's  
Disability Services  
HSE Carlow Kilkenny and  
Tipperary South  
HSE Waterford Wexford

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27<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Mr. Mattie McGrath TD  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 7077/25**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the urgent steps being taken to improve disability services in South Tipperary; the number of vacancies within CDNT teams 4 and 5; the numbers of children waiting for occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychology services within these CDNT teams; whether those waiting for services can access services privately with reimbursement; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy McGrath,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

*I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.*

HSE Children's Disability Services has undergone significant reform and restructuring over the past three years with the implementation of the Progressing Disability Services (PDS). The core focus of this change is to ensure that children and their families, with complex interdisciplinary needs, will receive an appropriate and accessible family centred service.

All children on CDNT registers, both CDNT waiting lists and open caseloads are likely to be waiting for some aspect of their intervention. As an interdisciplinary service, vacancies for some disciplines can further restrict the capacity to provide an intervention that requires more than one discipline.

There are currently 3.60 WTE vacancies on CDNT Network 4 Cashel and 3.50 WTE on CDNT Network 5 Clonmel (noting this is at a specific point in time and subject to change).

Number of children waiting for OT, SLT, and Psychology Services in CDNT Cashel and Clonmel:

No. of children awaiting services	CDNT Cashel	CDNT Clonmel
Speech and Language Therapy	282	325
Occupational Therapy	127	546
Psychology	51	111

\*This data is collated at a specific point in time and therefore subject to change.

As an interim measure CDNT Network 4 Cashel initiative aims to address their longest waiters for Occupational Therapy through a parent coaching model. CDNT Cashel has outsourced SLT working with the team (part-time). Positive Behaviour Service (PBS) are working with CDNT Cashel to address Psychology waitlist for any child appropriate for this service. An initial Screening Assessment is being facilitated by a team of clinicians via home visits.

As an interim measure CDNT Network 5 commenced a Pilot Initiative in October 2024 to address the needs of children and their families in the 0-6 years age bracket. A five week DIR (Development individual differences and relationships) programme has been offered and delivered to 58 children and their parents/guardians. Therapists/facilitators offer three parent education sessions and two individual sessions. Feedback from families has been hugely positive with therapists also being able to feedback to other disciplines on the team who the child may be waitlisted for e.g. Occupational Therapy. Onward pathways such as Toileting Clinics have also been identified during this intervention and supports have been offered. DIR Floor time training has been delivered to other Clinicians on the



CDNT Clonmel and therefore it is hoped that this will further support addressing the waiting lists for Children in the age bracket of 0-6 years.

A further SLT initiative in CDNT Clonmel has been the SLT Communication Advice Clinic that has been offered to children identified in the medium priority category. Parents can attend themselves or bring their child.

At present, the HSE does not fund or reimburse any fees paid to private practitioners in any of the health service areas where assessments have been commissioned by the service user or their family.

As with other areas Disability Services within IHA Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary are continuing to experience significant recruitment challenges. The HSE is operating in a very competitive market as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals nationally and internationally. IHA Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary continues to prioritise local competitions for all disciplines and continues to express posts out to current national panels where relevant.

The HSE acknowledges that waiting times for CDNT service at this time are stressful for children and their families, and will continue to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff into our CDNTs.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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**Maeve Cleary**  
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**IHA Carlow Kilkenny/Tipperary South**  
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