



22nd July 2025

Mr. John McGuinness TD
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 40445/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality if she will outline the number of vacant positions in the Kilkenny-Thomastown CDNT area; the length of time that each position has remained vacant; the efforts being made to recruit the necessary professionals; the number of children on the waiting list; if those waiting the longest will be referred to private specialists; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McGuinness,

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 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.

The tables below are based on the most recent data available which is captured at a specific point in time and subject to change.

Table 1 reflects the number of children on Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) - Network 2 Thomastown waiting list for therapy or assessment or any appointment:

Metric	No. of Children
No. of children waiting 0-3 months on CDNT waiting list at month end	13
No. of children waiting 4-6 months on CDNT waiting list at month end	3
No. of children waiting 7-12 months on CDNT waiting list at month end	6
No. of children waiting over 12 months on CDNT waiting list at month end	57
Total no. of children on CDNT waiting list at month end	79

CDNT Thomastown has a plan in place to contact the families of the longest waiting children before year end to establish what their current level of need is and schedule team assessment appointments as required. This is dependent on staffing capacity and the level of high / priority



clinical need. CDNT Thomastown prioritises children based on clinical need in the first instance. To date, the team has had limited capacity to offer team assessment appointments and reviews to children who do not meet the clinical Priority 1 criteria.

It is not planned to refer those waiting longest to access intervention to private providers.

Table 2 below reflects the number of vacant positions on the Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) - Network 2 Thomastown.

CDNT	Post	WTE
Thomastown	Speech & Language Therapist	1.00

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. The IHA 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 not appropriate and 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,

Maeve Cleary
General Manager - Children's Disability Services
IHA Carlow Kilkenny/Tipperary South
IHA Waterford Wexford

