



12th August 2025

Mr. Michael Cahill, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 41374/25

“To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality if she is aware of the significant delays in accessing SLT and OT services through children's disability network teams in Kerry, due to chronic understaffing and the use of limited-hour contracts; and the targeted actions being taken to address these staffing issues in the county.”

Dear Deputy Cahill,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to respond to your parliamentary question submitted to the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) in HSE South West were established to provide interdisciplinary supports for children and young people with complex disability needs within defined geographical areas. These teams are managed by five lead agencies; Horizons, Brothers of Charity Southern Services, Enable Ireland, St. Joseph's Foundation and CoAction West Cork. There are fourteen CDNTs operating in HSE South West; eleven in Cork and three in Kerry.

The CDNTs in Kerry are managed by Brothers of Charity Southern Services (North Kerry CDNT 1 and South Kerry CDNT 3) and Enable Ireland (West Kerry CDNT 2). The table below provides information on the status of approved Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy posts within the three Kerry CDNTs.

Discipline	SLT		OT		Comment
	Filled	Vacant	Filled	Vacant	
CDNT 1	2.3	1.8	3	1	1.8 vacant (Maternity Leave)
CDNT 2	3	1	3	0	1 vacant (Maternity leave)
CDNT 3	5.1	1	5.6	0	1 unfilled post



Vacancies within CDNTs which arise due to statutory leave entitlements (maternity leave, parental leave); sick leave, career breaks etc. impact on the waiting times for initial contact and service delivery.

Access to flexible working arrangements can support staff retention. On occasion, when staff avail of flexible working arrangements a CDNT might be able to combine unfilled hours to create a temporary, part time vacancy. This allows the CDNT to retain experienced staff and also to maximise the staff available to the team. The HSE along with the lead agencies continue to progress recruitment campaigns including recruitment abroad initiatives and every effort is being made to recruit to approved vacant posts.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,

Angela O'Neill
Head of Disability Services,
HSE South West.