



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
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, Limerick.

7th October 2025

Deputy Cormac Devlin,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: cormac.devlin@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 50205/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality if she is aware of significant issues with complex care coordination for children with neurological conditions: that there is a critical need for case management key worker support for children with complex neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Devlin,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay ensures that children under 18 are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs i.e. Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties arising from their disability. Children with neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions may access supports from a Children's Disability Network Team or from Primary Care or from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) depending on the complexity of their needs.

Childrens Disability Services

There are currently 93 Childrens' Disability Network Teams (CDNTs), aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country, providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age. Children with neurological conditions are currently receiving supports through these teams and other community services such as within the primary care setting.

Children's disability services are provided based on the presenting needs of the child rather than by their diagnosis or the actual type of disability or service required. Services provided are tailored to the individual needs and requirements of the child with disabilities including neurological conditions.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy. The model of service for all CDNTs is family-centred and based on the needs of the child. This includes universal, targeted and specialised supports and interventions, as appropriate to the individual child and family. It is based on the objectives of empowering and supporting parents and others who are with the child on a daily basis to facilitate the child's developmental needs.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for almost 45,000 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow.

The HSE's Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People, 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, is well advanced in its delivery

The Roadmap has four Working Groups and by year end, 45 of its 60 goals will have been achieved. The remaining goals and new initiatives will continue being implemented into and throughout 2026 to drive ongoing service development.



In addition, to improve services for children and young people with complex need as a result of their disability and their families, supporting the children to reach their full potential, the HSE has submitted a proposal for key Workers for the CDNTs for 2026.

The National Clinical Programme for People with Disabilities (NCPD)

The HSE is working to improve services for children with disabilities, including children with complex neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions.

The Disability Regional Enhanced Supports & Service (DRESS) is a framework under the Health Service Executive / National Clinical Programme for People with Disabilities (NCPD) for providing specialised, regionally organised supports to children with very complex disabilities.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) provide day-to-day, local interdisciplinary services for most children with disabilities. When a child requires access to high-level specialist skills (e.g. in spasticity management, dysphagia evaluation), DRESS practitioners (who have advanced/specialist skills) can provide clinical supervision, mentoring, and case consultation for CDNT staff.

In addition, DRESS is linked with SEED centres/networks (Sharing Experience and Expertise in Disability), which act as regional hubs of research, teaching, and professional development. CDNT staff can access education, workshops, and updates through these hubs. This builds CDNT capacity over time so that more specialised issues can be handled locally in the future.

The principal specialised DRESS pathways currently developed include:

- Motor Management / Postural / Physical Disability / Spasticity / Orthopaedic / Tone Management
- Feeding, Eating, Drinking & Swallowing (FEDS)
- Complex Behaviour

Please see link <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/disability/programme-publications/>

These pathways are relevant to many neurologically based conditions (e.g. cerebral palsy, neuromuscular disease, acquired brain injury, degenerative neurological conditions) manifest in difficulties in motor function, postural management, spasticity, dysphagia, and behavioural challenges.

The "Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023–2026" reflects that capacity building is underway: creating SEED centres, developing educational supports, piloting complex behaviour interventions, starting to embed DRESS logic in service planning

Yours Sincerely,

Tom McGuirk,
General Manager, Disability Services, Access & Integration