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Dear Deputy Tully,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 10787/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 213 of 2 December 2021, if he will provide this Deputy with copies of the staffing census of the children's disability network teams and the details of the workforce plan for the sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 10788/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the status of the implementation of the National Management Information System for the 91 children's disability network teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 10789/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the current shortfall in therapist posts per children's disability network team; the type of therapist posts that are short per children's disability network team in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 10793/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children with a disability allocated to each children's disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 10794/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 213 of 2 December 2021, if all the 85 posts approved in mid-2021 for services in special schools have been filled; if these posts are located within special schools or within children's disability network teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 11003/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health if there is a workforce plan in place for children's disability network teams that identifies future staffing needs within children's disability network teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 11673/22**



To ask the Minister for Health the details of each staffing role within children's disability network teams; the number working within each role in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

## HSE Response

### Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)

In 2021, the remainder of ninety one Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) were established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area.

These 91 Children's Disability Networks (CDN) are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and each Children's Disability Network has one CDNT providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team will work closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities. Every child with complex needs will have access to a team, regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend.

Children and their families will have access to the full range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

The first step for all areas has been the reconfiguration of existing staff resources into CDNTs. The staffing mix available in each area is influenced by the historical development of services. For example, some areas may have had a significant number of nurses available for reconfiguration, others may have family support workers or early educators.

Since 2019, more than 475 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. These posts have been assigned based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area.

All CDNTs will provide supports for children with complex needs regardless of their diagnosis, where they live or where they go to school. School based supports will be provided where appropriate.

The table below provides detail regarding the number of development posts by whole-time equivalent allocated to CDNTs in 2019, 2021 and 2022. The Children's Disability Networks Governance Group at CHO level, decided the allocation of these posts by discipline and team in line with the governance procedures for CDNTs. The full allocation for 2022 has not yet been agreed, so only those posts that have been allocated are included here.

CDNT Development Posts			
	2019	2021	2022
CHO1	12	15.7	11
CHO2	3.5	15.5	5
CHO3	12	13.4	4
CHO4	6	13.3	14.5
CHO5	15	16	26
CHO6	3.5	32.32	4
CHO7	13	26.6	24.5
CHO8	19	14.95	23.5
CHO9	16	39.55	17.5
<b>Specialist Services</b>			18.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187.32</b>	<b>148.5</b>

With regard to the staffing census of the children's disability network teams, the details of the workforce plan for the sector and current shortfall in therapist posts, information regarding the staffing of the CDNTs is currently in draft and



awaiting validation. The data from the CDNT staff census will inform a workforce plan for the sector that is currently in development.

Regarding the 85 posts approved in mid-2021 for services in special schools, as required by Minister Anne Rabbitte and the Department of Health, the eighty five posts allocated to support services in thirty three special schools are assigned to the local Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT). The staff recruited to these posts will report to the Children's Disability Network Manager. The CDNT will continue to provide services to the children attending these schools. School based services will continue to be provided.

With regard to the National Management Information System, the HSE has now signed a contract, following a procurement process via etenders, to provide the Children's Disability Network Team Information Management System to all 91 teams. To ensure maximum data security, enabling works are currently underway for the build of the development, testing, training and live production environment with the HSE's Cloud hosting partner Eir Evo.

The successful vendor with whom the HSE have signed the contract with, following the aforementioned tender process, will then commence a seven month software development, testing, migration and training programme, before rolling the Children's Disability Network Team Information Management System out to all 91 teams across the country on a phased basis over the following nine months. When implemented, it will provide current data on waiting lists for all CDNTs. In the interim, manual data collection is on-going and will provide information to the local areas regarding the number of children waiting for each CDNT.

Yours sincerely



**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Head of Operations - Disability Services,**  
**Community Operations**

