



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Social Care Division,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

5th December 2023

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,

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

PQ: 49810/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth in relation to the response from a Topical Issue on Disability on 17 October 2023 (details supplied), if the €56 million unspent referenced within the disability budget has been repurposed; if so, to what has this funding been repurposed; and if any of this funding has been repurposed to the Children's disability service grant fund.

Details supplied: Link to Ministers response:

https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2023-10-17/29/?highlight%5B0%5D=repurposing#spk_283

HSE Response

The HSE is committed to the delivery of appropriate services for children with disabilities, is working to address waiting times and continues to work with families and staff to develop services that meet their needs. There are various approaches being taken to ensure improvement to the delivery of services to children with disability

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

Since 2019, more than 610 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. These posts have been assigned to teams based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area. This figure includes 190 posts provided in 2022 as well as an additional 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.

Based on the CDNT Staffing Census (Oct 2022), there are over 700 vacant whole time equivalent posts in CDNTs. The HSE continues to explore a range of options to enhance the retention and recruitment of essential staff across all aspects of the health services.

The HSE is operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. The HSE Community Operations Disability Services is working



collaboratively with the CDNT lead agencies at CHO level to promote CDNTs as a workplace of choice in a competitive employment market.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for 45,741 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow.

In addition, substantial work has been undertaken by the HSE to develop a Roadmap for Service Improvement for Disability Services for Children and Young People which was approved by the HSE Board on July 28th and was launched by the Government and the HSE on Tuesday 24th October 2023.

The actions also include a robust suite of CDNT Retention and Recruitment targets, the majority of which are now in train. For example;

- National Team Development Programme (delivery of the 2ND extensive two year programme prioritised by the CDNTs will be completed by Mar '24)
- Online lunchtime staff webinars (on-going monthly)
- Online basecamp account for staff and team managers to share innovative programmes, practices and resources across the country
- Confined Senior grade competition for CDNTs - completed
- Additional 20 Senior clinical psychology trainee placements
- Marketing CDNTs as a workplace of choice
- HSE HR engagement with graduates in person and via webinar
- Recordings of CDNT staff and parents on benefits of working or receiving services from a CDNT, used for recruitment of staff off national panels
- HSE Recruitment, Reform and Resourcing has featured CDNTs on their "Service in the Spotlight", hosted on the HSE Career Hub. The 16,000 individuals now registered on the hub will receive notice of the targeted recruitment campaign for CDNTs and be encouraged to share with family and friends, extending our reach into the market.

The HSE acknowledge the current challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff and work is also progressing to commence the following;

- Student Sponsorship Programmes
- Targeted recruitment campaigns for senior and staff grade therapies will commence in early December 2023 to fill existing vacancies on HSE, S.38 and S.39 Lead Agency teams.

In addition, Minister of State, Anne Rabbitte, has convened a Disabilities Workforce Enhancement Group, including National Disability Operations Team and NCPPD representation, focused on the immediate, medium and long term sustainability of Disabilities workforce, including CDNT.

With regard to any financial underspend, spending pressures and commitments include as follows:

All Community HealthCare Areas (CHO) are reporting an increase in Agency/ Overtime premia due to staff vacancies with a current Quarter 2 projected deficit of €22.16m.

Residential placements continues to be an area of high pressure spend. The HSE received €13m funding in 2023 for 43 new cases, however YTD October 2023, the HSE has placed 107 cases at an expected 2023 cost of €22.4m.

Home support packages and rate increases is expected to yield a deficit in 2023 of €14.9m.

Inflation costs continue to present with a current Q2 estimated projection of €12.7m.

Childrens Disability Services Grant Scheme

Additional funding has been provided to Childrens Disability Services under a new grant scheme.

The Children's Disability Services Grant Fund is open to organisations, including community groups and service providers and aims to support children who are on a waiting list for Children's Disability Network Team services.



There has been a huge response from voluntary and community groups and private agencies, with almost 500 applications for funding, ranging from proposals for several thousand euro to larger projects seeking in excess of one million euro over three years.

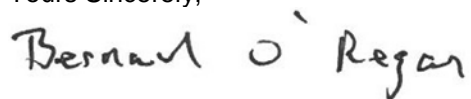
Due to the volume of applications and the additional administrative work involved in co-ordinating and collating the proposals, we have had to revise the anticipated time-frame for the assessment process and the award of funding to successful proposals.

A panel will assess all applications based on the following criteria:

- Quality and coherence of proposal;
- Contribution to wellbeing of children and families
- Potential lasting impact
- Capacity and sustainability of providers to deliver person-centred services and comply with standards
- Value for money

We propose to issue letters to successful applicants in the week beginning 22th January 2024 and two weeks later, in the week beginning 5th February 2024, we will commence the process of engagement with successful applicants around the drawdown of funds.

Yours Sincerely,



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

