



26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Mr. Martin Browne TD  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 47323/23**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if his Department has any plans to provide alternative appointments for children whose physiotherapy appointments in Cashel have been cancelled due to staffing issues; if additional staff cannot be provided in Cashel, if the HSE will be able to temporarily provide appointments in neighbouring areas until the staffing issue in Cashel is resolved.**

Dear Deputy Browne,

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 Health for response.

*I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.*

As with other Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) the CDNT Network 4 Cashel is currently experiencing staffing challenges. A member of the team is on statutory leave and a Senior Physiotherapist is currently working (until October 2024) one day per week with the aim of addressing the backlog.

CDNT Network 4 continues to explore all recruitment options and where possible and appropriate outsource to external providers. Outsourcing is also impacted by the capacity of external providers.

In addition where feasible CDNT Network 4 has secured appointments for children with Physiotherapists in other CDNTs. This is subject to availability and capacity of the particular discipline on other CDNTs.

The CDNT regrets that current staffing levels are impacting on service delivery.

As with other areas Disability Services within South East Community Healthcare (SECH) 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. SECH continues to prioritise local competitions for all disciplines and continues to express posts out to current national panels where relevant.

The HSE acknowledge that waiting times for CDNT service at this time are 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,

*Karen Fitzgerald*

---

**Karen Fitzgerald**  
**A/Head of Service – Disability Services**  
**South East Community Healthcare**