



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

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
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31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

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21<sup>st</sup> November 2023

Deputy Verona Murphy,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Murphy,

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: 47459/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the level of funding due to be allocated over the next 12 months to agencies within the remit of his Department to support the prevention and early intervention benefits of parenting support; the nature of the activities that will be funded through such allocations; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 47460/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware of developments internationally to encourage the uptake of parenting support programmes, including the universal funding of programmes; whether he sees merit in expanding the availability of such programmes to parents and guardians in Ireland in the context of the public health benefits that they deliver in a community health context; the level of funding being allocated to such programmes over the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter*

**HSE Response**

It has been clarified that these PQs are in relation to CDNTs and supports for parents who have children with disabilities.

Across all service areas, a wide range of organisations and agencies, whose main purpose is the provision of information and support networks and services to parents, families and carers, are funded through Grant Aid Agreements and Services Arrangements with the HSE.

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.



Including the HSE there are 12 lead agencies for the CDNTs who are in receipt of significant levels of funding for service provision.

These are as follows: Avista, Brothers of Charity, CRC, Co-Action West Cork, Cope Foundation, KARE, Enable Ireland, St Gabriel's, St Joseph's Foundation, St Michael's House and Stewart's Care.

Regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend, every child with complex needs and their families have access to the range of family centred services and supports of their 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 are provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community. 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.

The focus within the CDNTs is development of the interdisciplinary family centred practice (FCP) model consistently across all teams. Moving from the traditional deficits focused 'Expert/Medical' model to a strengths based, child and family outcome focused model involves a significant mind-set change for all stakeholders, including health professionals, families and referrers.

All children develop and learn by taking part in daily life and activities with their family, in their home, in pre-school, in school and their community. The child's family and those who are with them every day are the most important people in their lives. Family centred practice focuses on the child and family's strengths, capacity and skills. The family and team work in equal partnership to explore the child and family's daily routine and to identify the child and family's priorities and goals and how the team will support them to achieve their goals.

Following on from the National Team Development Programme, HSE Disabilities is providing continued training and development for CDNTs in Family Centred Practice, including service planning and delivery with families.

### **Roadmap for Service Improvement for Disability Services for Children and Young People**

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 Roadmap is a 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. It sets out the overall aim for Children's Disability Services, provided by the HSE and its partner agencies, that for every child to have a childhood of inclusive experiences where they can have fun, learn, develop interests and skills, and form positive relationships with others in a range of different settings.

The Roadmap demonstrates this deep commitment and intention to deliver and by doing so, it will:

Build confidence for parents and children, create greater access and equity, and deliver a better experience for families by supporting efforts to shift the clinical response to one of family centred intervention as distinct to diagnostic and assessment centred practice.

All Family Forums and Family Representative Groups will be in place in 2023 with 2 Family Representatives on each CHO CDNT Governance Group. This is critical to ensuring that families' voices are heard and an authentic partnership with children's disability services is forged to inform service developments and improvements. HSE National Disabilities will survey Family Representatives Groups on their experience of the Roadmap implementation on a six-monthly basis.



CHO Workshops will be hosted with CDNT staff on the Roadmap, communication, CDNT culture, and training and development requirements

## **Parents Plus**

Parents Plus, is a S39 registered charity which trains and supports over 800 professionals as facilitators each year throughout Ireland, the UK and internationally.

Their bespoke train-the-trainer model ensures that professional service providers are best equipped to improve the lives of thousands of families and young people in a variety of settings, including family resource centres, child and adolescent mental health clinics; and disability services, childcare centres and preschools; primary and secondary schools; and child protection agencies.

Trained professionals include teachers, social workers, speech and language therapists, psychologists, family support workers, public health nurses, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, childcare workers, mental health workers, health promotion officers and community workers.

According to Parents Plus 2022 Annual Report, there are 24 internationally recognised studies conducted in clinical, community and disability settings, attesting to their effectiveness for families dealing with a variety of challenges and issues.

These studies have all been independently supervised by University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick.

Parents Plus Mission is to improve the outcomes for children, young people and parents and to strengthen families by empowering professionals to deliver Parents Plus evidence based programmes in their services.

Parents Plus Vision is that all parents will have access to proven and tailored parenting tools, from the services they turn to, at the point of need, in their communities, improving their outcomes.

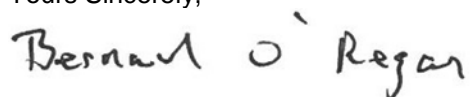
Parents Plus will work in partnership with the national network of 91 CDNTs to support delivery of this organisation's and the HSEs commitment to improving outcomes for families raising a child with a disability, with evidence based service delivery, equitable access in local disability services, at the point of need.

This initiative will build the capacity of the interdisciplinary CDNTs to deliver evidence based parenting support, tailored to the diverse needs of their service users and families. Ensuring outcomes of family centred practice built on collaboration and sustainability through working together at local and national level, the partnership will empower parents by strengthening their knowledge, confidence and skills, to maximise opportunities for growth and development of their child and improve the wellbeing and outcomes of their children, families and communities .

Funding from HSE Disability Services to Parents Plus will be as follows:

- December 2023: €22,000
- 2024: €250,000
- 2025: €253,236
- 2026: €253,236

Yours Sincerely,



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

