



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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26<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Deputy Cormac Devlin,  
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Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Devlin,

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: 56373/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth how many times each of the children's disability network teams have met, for each local authority area each month since 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

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.

A Children's Disability Network Team is a team of health and social care professionals supported by administration staff, who provide services for children with complex needs in a specific geographical area.

The 91 CDNTs are all fully in place since 2021. Information is not collated regarding the number of times each CDNT has met.

The CDNT service model is based on a partnership between families and team members which focuses on a child's strengths, capacity and skills. Teams help families develop confidence to support their child's needs at home, at school and in their community. Teams work in partnership with educators to gain a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the child and their family.

The (CDNT) interdisciplinary service model is child and family centred where the team work together with the family to identify the important issues from the family's perspective to be addressed, agree a plan to address those issues, implement the plan and monitor the outcomes. This Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) is a 'live' process in that the team and family keep it under review whilst service supports and strategies are being implemented and as the child and family's needs and achievements change. Each child may benefit from different types of supports depending on their current needs and prioritised issues identified by their family, and this may change over time as the child and family's needs change. Meetings with families can be held on line or in person.



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. However, there are significant challenges for CDNTs including:

- Significant staffing vacancies
- Growth in numbers of children with complex need
- Growth in demand for Assessment of Need, diverting further resources away from interventions.

### **Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People**

The HSE's Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People was approved by the HSE Board on July 28th and 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.

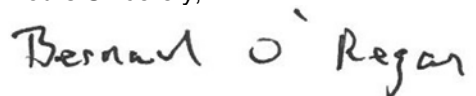
It sets out the overall aim for Children's Disability Services, provided by the HSE and its partner agencies, for every child to have a childhood of inclusive experiences where they can have fun, learn, develop interests and skills, and form positive relationships with others in a range of different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

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 Roadmap actions includes a robust suite of 60 actions, including 21 on CDNT Retention and Recruitment targets, and many of which are now in train.

The HSE will complete a Project Plan this month (January 2024) to support the roll out of the Roadmap. CHO Information Sessions and CDNMs workshops, paused in November 2023 due to industrial action, will be reset pending agreement from the trade unions. The Roadmap Governance and Implementation Structures including monthly Working Groups and Service Improvement Programme Board will commence at that point.

Yours Sincerely,



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

