



Oifig an Stiúirthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Áras Phlásóg na Rós, Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile,
Páirc Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta,
Caladh an Treoigh,
Luimneach.

Office of the Assistant National Director,
National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,
National Technology Park,
Castletroy,
Limerick.

12th July 2024

Deputy Martin Browne,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: martin.browne@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Browne,

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: 28899/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the funding spent on the drive to recruit health and social care professionals into children's disability network teams which ended in January 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ: 28900/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of vacancies advertised through the drive to recruit health and social care professionals into children's disability network teams which ended in January 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ: 28901/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the availability of the 2023 national report on children's disability network teams staff census and workforce review; to provide a copy of such if available; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

HSE Response

93 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.

The model of service for all CDNTs is family-centred and based on the needs of the child. This includes universal, targeted and specialised supports and interventions, as appropriate to the individual child and family. It is based on the objectives of empowering and supporting parents and others who are with the child on a daily basis to facilitate the child's developmental needs.



The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for over 46,000 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

The HSE's *Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People*, launched in October 2023, now in implementation phase, 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.

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

Recruitment for CDNTs overall

Since 2019, more than 610 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. However, we also know that there are over 700 vacant whole time equivalent posts in our CDNTs. 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 contains a robust suite of CDNT Retention and Recruitment targets, the majority of which are now in train. For example;

- National Team Development Programme (2ND currently ongoing)
- 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
- 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 is also progressing to commence the following;

- Student Sponsorship Programmes.
- Additional 20 Senior Clinical Psychology trainee placements.
- Confined Senior Grade competition and the upgrading of up to 60 senior posts to clinical specialist grade, initiatives to support retention, service quality and safety, and providing a career pathway.
- A recruitment plan for 462 HSCP by the end of 2024.
- 300 therapy assistants over 2023-2025 to support HSCPs in delivering most effective and efficient services in environments appropriate to each child's needs.

Recruitment Campaign

Despite the recruitment pause in November 2023, the CEO of the HSE made derogations in relation to recruitment for a range of essential services.

The first media advertising campaign for Children's Disability Network Teams – '*Be part of our team, Be part of their lives*', commenced in January 2024.



The roles being recruited were, newly qualified and experienced dieticians, occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers, speech and language therapists.

A simple online application process accessed via www.hse.ie/cdnt meant roles in disability partner organisations (Sec 38s and 39s) could be included. This was important as each lead agency is responsible for their own recruitment. The HSE is a lead agency for 41 of the 93 teams.

Working with our contracted agencies and following extensive input from parents and staff in the HSE and disability partner organisations, we created an advertising campaign that helped us engage with our target audience effectively.

The campaign cost, including creative, media and production was approx €62k (ex vat).

The campaign yielded 495 applications across the 6 professions outlined above.

59% of the applications were for senior grades and 41% were for staff grade entry level positions. As the public sector is the main employer of these grades, the majority of applicants (75%) were already employed in the public health and social care services. These internal candidates were mainly looking for either a promotion or to move locations or to move care settings.

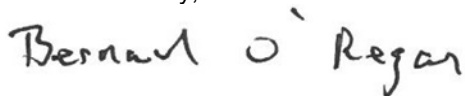
To date, 30 applicants who were successful at interview have accepted jobs and have or are commencing work in the CDNTs. It should be noted that the demand for these HSCP professions significantly outstrips supply both nationally and internationally.

The HSE Resourcing Strategy '*Resourcing our Future*' was launched in May 2023 to ensure a sufficient domestic supply of health care staff.

The strategy is being implemented by the services locally to maximise the resourcing and delivery of publicly funded health services for the future.

Due to the recent Forsa Industrial Action, work on the CDNT Staffing Census 2023 was delayed. It is expected that this report will be available in due course.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

