



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.

31st July 2024

Deputy Sean Sherlock,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: sean.sherlock@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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: 29020/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of occupational therapists employed in each CDNT; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to occupational therapists, in tabular form.

PQ: 29021/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of paediatric occupational therapists employed in each LHO; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to paediatric occupational therapists, in tabular form.

PQ: 29022/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of speech and language therapists employed in each CDNT; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to speech and language therapists, in tabular form.

PQ: 29023/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of physiotherapists employed in each CDNT; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to physiotherapists, in tabular form.

PQ: 29024/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of psychotherapists employed in each CDNT; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to psychotherapists, in tabular form



PQ: 29025/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of paediatric speech and language therapists employed in each LHO; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to paediatric speech and language therapists, in tabular form.

PQ: 29026/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of paediatric physiotherapists employed in each LHO; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to paediatric physiotherapists, in tabular form.

PQ: 29027/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of paediatric psychotherapists employed in each LHO; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to paediatric psychotherapists, in tabular form

PQ: 29028/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of paediatric audiologists employed in each LHO; and the vacant positions in each CDNT relating to paediatric audiologists, in tabular form. -

HSE Response

The attached CDNT Staff Census and Workforce Review 2023 gives a picture of the staff working in our children’s disability teams on October 11th 2023. An industrial relations process impacted the return of data captured in October 2023 and delayed publication of the report.

The 2023 census and workforce review shows,

- Total number of filled whole time posts - 1,437 up 3% on last year
- Total number of filled therapy posts - 1,179
- Total number of vacancies nationally at 11/10/23 - 817.23

Year	Total approved whole time posts	% Increase year on year	Total filled whole time posts	% Increase year on year	No of therapy posts
2023	2,255	7%	1,437	3%	1179
2022	2,102	10%	1,395	2%	1183
2021	1,892		1,367		1173

Childrens Disability Services

In line with the Progressing Disability Services model, resources assigned to children’s disability services are allocated to the 0 – 18 Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). 93 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 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



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 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, now in its implementation phase, has established four Working Groups which report into a Service Improvement Programme Board every month which in turn reports to the Roadmap Oversight Group chaired by the Minister of State, Ann Rabbitte.

Working Group 3: Workforce – has responsibility for developing a recruitment strategy for all CDNTs regardless of the Lead Agency; Retention of existing CDNT staff; Deployment of Students/Trainees/New Graduates; and Development of Existing Staff.

With regard to questions asked concerning vacant positions on the CDNTs, please see the attached the 2023 CDNT Staffing Census and Workforce Review.

Please note that there are no psychotherapists employed on the CDNTs.

Retention and recruitment

The HSE and disability providers continue to focus on staff retention and recruitment. There is an acknowledged national and international shortage of health and social care professionals with the necessary qualifications and experience. Seven of the disciplines working in children's disability teams have been included on the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Critical Skills Occupations List*. Despite this challenge the HSE and partner disability organisations have increased the capacity of CDNTs by 3%. There has been further net growth across the Disability services in 2024.

Jobs are being actively offered to candidates. To support interest in these roles, staff from the CDNTs delivered a series of webinars in July, to help prospective employees learn about the roles we're offering, inter-disciplinary team working and the children and families we support. There was large attendance from Ireland and abroad.

The HSE Careers Hub is highlighting working in Children's Disability Network Teams. The HSE is actively engaging with undergraduates through the Higher Education Institutes, spotlighting disability roles in career and recruitment fairs and generating future interest in working in the disability services with outreach into secondary schools.

The number of clinical placements in CDNTs has been increased and will continue to grow to encourage health and social care undergraduates to choose a job in children's disability services post- graduation.

The HSE with the partner voluntary agencies are developing new disciplines to optimise workforce potential with access to these roles pitched at lower entry level and opportunities to pursue further education in an apprenticeship model.

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

