



Oifig an Stiúrthóir 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.

25th June 2024

Deputy Patrick Costello,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: patrick.costello@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Costello

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: 26815/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for an update in relation to the 21 actions for CDNT retention and recruitment as part of the HSE's Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023-2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

HSE Response

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 and launched by the Government and the HSE in 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.

Two industrial actions, one relevant to CDNT staff and another to Administration and Management, impacted significantly on its implementation until they were stepped down in January and February 2024 respectively. This released the HSE to progress the critical elements of the Roadmap. The Roadmap is now in its implementation phase.



The Roadmap 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. A 5th group: will focus on optimising integration between Education and Health and support for special schools. Discussions are ongoing between DCEDIY and Department of Education in regard to its set up and shared leadership.

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.

The Roadmap contains 60 actions including 21 actions regarding CDNT Retention and recruitment initiatives.

CDNT Retention and Recruitment Roadmap actions completed or ongoing are:

- Confined Senior Grade competition was completed last summer.
- National CDNT Training Programme 2022/2023 was completed in Q1 2024 at a cost of €700k
- 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
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- 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.
- HSCP targeted recruitment campaign launched in Jan for Dietitians, OTs, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Speech Language Therapists and Social Workers. As of Apr 8th, 151 job offers were made.

Actions in progress

- 45 new clinical psychology trainee places commenced in Sept '23, with a further 45 in Sept '24 and in Sept '25 for all healthcare settings. Disabilities will develop additional traction strategy to optimise their uptake in disability services.
- 238 student placements provided in CDNTs for 2022/2023 academic year. Minimum target of 1 student per 2 WTE HSCPs in post on CDNTs is set for incoming academic year, increasing total number nationally by 47% from 230 to 336 minimum as a recruitment and retention strategy. A webinar was held for CDNTs to share benefits for both students, teams and individual clinicians of taking students
- CHOs Service Improvement Plans in development – template include CHO's CDNT Retention Plan
- HSE HR working with DOH on no. of grade codes to facilitate employment of new graduates on therapy graduate grades in health service whilst awaiting CORU registration.
- CHOs 3 & 4 are developing an SOP for onboarding and embedding Therapy Assistants safely and optimally into CDNTs
- HSE HR with tax specialist expertise is exploring viability of 4 years' salary over 5 for new graduates to facilitate a career break in year 5.
- Launch programme for eligible staff to complete Masters to qualify as therapists – CHO 1 has this programme in place for a number of student HSCPs in Cardiff University.
- Some of 6 Clinical Specialists/CHO approved in 2022/23 are filled, others are in the recruitment process
- 50 Therapy Assistants allocated to CHOs for recruitment in Sept '23 and are in the recruitment process. Further 125 are due to be allocated this month. TAs recruitment campaign to commence in the coming weeks with the launch of a portal for Expressions of Interest.
- Plan for a National Psychology Placement Office has been subsumed into the new integrated clinical infrastructure across all Health and Social Care Professions being set up to support necessary clinical practice placements in order to grow HSCP workforce
- Tusla working with HSE and UCC have developed 1st social work apprenticeship programme to go live in 2024 with 12 apprentices to the HSE, a template for other HSCP professions.
- NCPPD is working with NCPPN to fill 3 Paediatrician posts with 80% community based to bridge existing CDNT and Primary Care service gaps.
- Business case for 3rd National CDNT Training Programme 2024/25 for €700k has been approved and funding allocated to CHOs for dissemination across all CDNTs



- Targeted HSCP recruitment campaign for CDNTs was run in Q1 2024 resulting in 55 new staff onboarded. This is in addition to those recruited directly by Section 39 lead agencies. Key learning from this is being gathered to inform further campaigns.
- HSE HR is working with CORU to streamline the process for international candidates for employment.
- HSE HR is collaborating with HEIs on increasing 3rd level HSCP programme capacity to meet service demands and to increase Therapy Assistant grades through FETAC programmes.
- Student sponsorship programme: letters of allocation to issue to Chief Officers shortly in advance of Sept 2024 academic year.

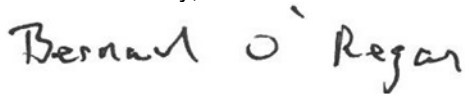
Actions on hold due to the recruitment pause:

- Recruitment of vacant CDNT Admin posts
- RHA Lead appointment, responsible for Roadmap Service Improvement Programme across the RHA and its Lead Agencies.

Actions not commenced are:

- Launch programmes to support i) therapy assistants in CDNTs return to education to qualify as therapists, ii) eligible staff to apply for Masters to qualify as therapists, iii) Return to Work incentivised programmes for recent retirees.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

