



4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Mr. Martin Browne TD  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 10594/24**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth his plans to address a shortfall of communication between CDNTs and families; if he is aware of dissatisfaction with the level of communication from the services to families in the south-east; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Browne,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

*I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.*

In Disability Services in the South East family participation in the Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) is promoted through Family Forums at Children Disability Network (CDN) level. The Family Forum provides an opportunity for families to discuss general issues and ideas about the children's disability services in the Network. Family members and carers of children and young people attending a CDNT in the Network are invited to join the Family Forum.

There are 12 CDNTs in the South East region. 11 CDNTs in the South East held their initial Family Forums in 2023 and the 12<sup>th</sup> CDNT held their initial Family Forum in February 2024. The next Family Forum to be held in each Network before mid-2024 will be dedicated to the election of the family representatives.

In the initial Family Forum in each Network, timely communication was a common theme that arose and was raised by families. Children's Disability Network Managers (CDNMs) acknowledged that there can be challenges with administrative support and their own work pressures does not always allow them to provide a timely response to families. Individual CDNMs have advised families at their initial Forums of their plans to address timely return calls to families. Parallel to this and as a proactive strategy South East Community Healthcare (SECH) have committed to families and are progressing:

1. A CDN website providing useful generic information and links for families to access. This will provide access to useful information for families and may negate the need to contact the network directly freeing up more direct access to the CDNMs for families with individual specific queries.
2. General Manager, Children's Disability Services and a CDNMs representative have begun engagement meetings with Families Unite for Services and Support (FUSS) representative as an additional forum to gather and hear the voice of families. A CDNT specific newsletter as a regular communication is a direct action from this consultation forum and some CDNT's have commenced providing same.

SECH is committed to continuing to build on and strengthen communications with families.



I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Fitzgerald'.

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**Karen Fitzgerald**  
**A/Head of Service – Disability Services**  
**South East Community Healthcare**