



**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.

7<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Deputy Emer Higgins,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie](mailto:emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Higgins,

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: 11548/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of therapy staff in each specialisation that have left the Children's Disability Network Teams system in the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 11550/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if a child who does not have access to an occupational therapist in their Children's Disability Network Team can access an occupational therapist in another Children's Disability Network Team; 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.

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.

Operational gaps in CDNTs, are managed by CHO CDNT Governance Groups, who may consider temporary redeployment or cross cover between teams in exceptional circumstances, also balancing the needs of all children attending CDNTs in their area.

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.

Due to the recent Forsa Industrial Action, work on the CDNT Staffing Census 2023 was delayed. This will be available in due course.

With regard to the first question asked, information is not collated centrally by the HSE regarding the number of staff who have retired or resigned from children's disability network teams.

Each CDNT is managed by a lead agency. These agencies include the HSE, S38 organisations and S39 organisations. The detail regarding the lead agencies is provided below.

Lead Agency	No. of CDNTs
HSE	41
Enable Ireland	20
Brothers of Charity	6
Central Remedial Clinic	5
Avista (Daughters of Charity)	4
St Michael's House	4
Cope Foundation	3
St Gabriel's	2
St Joseph's Foundation	2
Stewarts Care	2
CoAction West Cork	1
Kare	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>

The Strategic Workforce Planning and Intelligence Department of the HSE, as part of the Health Service Personnel Census (HSPC), produce a series of monthly reports detailing the numbers of staffing, per grade type in disability



services, broken down by CHO Area and by HSE and Section 38 provider organisations. The latest reports, which include staff turnover, can be accessed and downloaded on the following weblink:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/our-workforce/workforce-reporting/social-care.html>

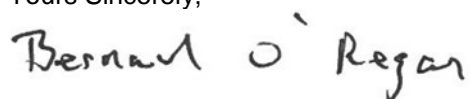
The Health Service Workforce census figures give a broad indication of the numbers of Health & Social Care professionals employed in Disability Services, which includes personnel employed by the HSE and voluntary Service Providers funded under Section 38 of the Health Act.

It is important to note that these reports do not include staff employed by Service Providers funded under Section 39 of the Health Act.

In addition, it is important to note also, that the staff numbers reported on serve all age groups and the HSE cannot apportion the staff working in children's disability services specifically.

Most of the disciplines working in CDNTs are similar to those working in other areas of the health services including Primary Care Services, Mental Health Services, Older Person Services and Acute Hospitals. The HSE and the various Lead Agencies experience ongoing challenges recruiting staff across a range of disciplines and grades.

Yours Sincerely,



**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**National Disability Team**

