



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Àras 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.

15th November 2024

Deputy Chris Andrews,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: chris.andrews@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Andrews,

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: 44202/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth when full-time therapists will be restored to each special school.

HSE Response

The Health Services Executive, and the Lead Agencies it funds, have been working continuously to develop supports for children with Disabilities.

In line with Government policy, the HSE has recruited approximately 80 of the 135 additional posts provided for by Government to restore supports to special schools to pre-reconfiguration levels.

The HSE and funded agencies continue to prioritise recruitment for children's services, including these posts. The range of measures have included:

- Dedicated and rolling recruitment campaigns
- The use of agency staffing where available
- Dedicated webinars with new graduates
- Engagement with Government to expand the number of graduate places
- Development of measures to enhance clinical placements in disability services

Further details in relation to recruitment is provided below.



Pilot in Special Schools

In August 2024, Government asked the HSE to initiate a pilot of dedicated supports, under the governance of the CDNTs, to six special schools initially, two in Dublin and four in Cork.

The HSE has worked with Lead Agencies and on-site therapy supports are in place from 30/9/24 in five of the six schools. The Lead Agency for the one school that has not yet progressed continues to engage with staff, supported by the HSE.

The HSE is working with representatives from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, the Department of Education and the NCSE at the National Oversight Group to lead the overall Pilot. In addition, local working groups are being established/have been established which will address any local issues.

A further ten schools are to be included in the Pilot and the National Oversight Group has commenced consideration of which schools are to be included. It is expected that this will be concluded and the schools announced in due course.

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 has four Working Groups reporting 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 21 actions dedicated to Retention of specialised CDNT staff, Recruitment of new graduates and experienced staff for all CDNTs, Deployment of Students/Trainees/New Graduates and Development of Existing Staff.

Recruitment

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 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.

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.

However, through ongoing effective work with our funded agencies with regard to recruitment, we undertook a focused Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) recruitment and interview process in 2024.

Work is ongoing to increase recruitment into disability services from recruitment stage through to promotional activity. Webinars were held in July 2024 '**Working in a Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) to increase interest in CDNTs and the presentation from this is available** through <https://careerhub.hse.ie/cdnt-webinar/>

These webinars were well attended with all participants encouraged to register their interest for a job within Children's Disability Network Teams through [Childrens Disability Network - HSE Career Hub](#)

The HSE is optimising multiple applicant engagement opportunities to encourage uptake of CDNT vacancies including recruitment fairs, outreach to third level colleges and secondary schools, presence at national events such as the recent Ploughing Championships and virtual engagements. In addition, the clinical placements in CDNTs have been increased so that students graduate with an interest in and familiarity with CDNTs.

To optimise recruitment into our funded agencies, the HSE have facilitated direct access for funded agencies to existing HSE HSCP panels which will shorten the recruitment process for them and will provide direct access to competent and eligible candidates. The HSE have also enabled our funded agencies to advertise their vacant posts through our



advertisement channels which provides them with direct access to the substantial candidate pools registered the HSE's CareerHub portal.

These activities form part of an ongoing suite of recruitment initiatives to populate vacancies on Children's Disability Network Teams.

Yours Sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan

Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

