



Cnoc Na Rí  
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9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Mr. Cathal Crowe TD,  
Dail Eireann,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 39018/24**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the actions being taken in Carlow CDNT to address significant and entrenched recruitment issues; the date by which all vacant positions in Carlow CDNT will be filled; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Crowe,

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.*

HSE Children's Disability Services has undergone significant reform and restructuring over the past three years with the implementation of the Progressing Disability Services (PDS). The core focus of this change is to ensure that children and their families, with complex interdisciplinary needs, will receive an appropriate and accessible family centred service.

This transition has been faced with certain challenges, and this is particularly relevant to the Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) – Network 1 Carlow. The approved staffing for the team is 24.41 WTE. The below table outlines the current vacancies on the team:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>WTE</b>
Social Worker	1.0
Senior Clinical Psychologist	1.5
Physiotherapy Assistant	1.0
Senior Speech and Language Therapist	1.6
Senior Occupational Therapist	1.8
Clinical Psychologist	2.0
Speech and Language Therapist	2.0
Senior Physiotherapist	1.0
Occupational Therapist	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.9 WTE</b>

The above mentioned current vacancies are having a significant impact on the CDNT delivering assessment, therapy and intervention in addition to implementing the PDS model and providing training and support pathways to parents.

The CDNT will continue to offer their School Transition Pathway, Postural Management Clinics, Orthotic Clinics, Foot Clinics, Balance Buddy Workshops, Toileting Workshops and Wellbeing Workshops for parents. The CDNT have developed an excellent Sensory Webinar which has been made available alongside Understanding Autism Webinar.

The CDNT will continue to develop universal training and appropriate pathways to provide the most efficient service possible within the context of these limited resources.

As with other areas Disability Services within South East Community Healthcare (SECH) are continuing to experience significant recruitment challenges. The HSE is operating in a very competitive market as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals nationally and internationally. South East Community Healthcare continues to express posts out to current national panels and continues to prioritise local recruitment campaigns.

Currently there a national campaign for basic grade clinicians for all disciplines specific to the South East region including Carlow. In conjunction with this there is a regional campaign for senior clinicians of all disciplines for the south east including Carlow.

The HSE acknowledges that waiting times for CDNT service at this time are stressful for children and their families, and will continue to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff into our CDNTs.

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

Yours sincerely,



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**Ms. Paula Dwan**  
**General Manager for Children's Disability Services**  
**South East Community Healthcare**