



Ceann na Seirbhíse Míchumas
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Slainte
Seirbhísi Pobaill (An Cabhán, Dún na
nGall, Liatroim, Muineachán &
Sligeach)
Áras Isacc Butt, Bealach Féich,
Tír Chonaill F93 YV9R

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25th October, 2024

Deputy Pearse Doherty
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ ref 39400/24

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the actions that have been taken to address the current crisis in CDNTs in County Donegal, specifically, the high number of positions vacant in CDNTs, long waiting lists, the failure to provide necessary equipment to children; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Doherty,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for response.

I have examined the matter and can advise that the recruitment of staff to Children’s Disability Network Team (CDNT) remains a high priority for the HSE and government as well as the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, due to workforce challenges in the sector. The HSE is the lead agency for the four CDNTs in County Donegal along with three of the other four CDNTs in Community Services area Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo.

The following actions have been taken by the HSE to address the vacancy and waiting list issues.

- Since October 2023, a total of 41 positions have been filled in CDNTs across HSE Services in Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo, including therapy, nursing, social care workers/leaders and clerical and administrative staff.
- Five additional posts were approved under the National Service Plan 2024 for CDNTs in recent weeks, including Clinical Specialist Therapist grade posts and two Principal Psychologist posts. These posts are currently being progressed through the recruitment process. The HSE Human Resources services will be progressing recruitment to these posts.

- There is continued focus in Human Resources services on establishing panels across all Health and Social Care professional disciplines – rolling campaigns are ongoing.
- Posts are being expressed to all panels held by the Human Resources services in an effort to fill vacant positions.
- The CDNT Service Manager reviews information on all vacancies on a weekly basis with any necessary actions followed up.
- Monthly joint Human Resource/Disability meetings on recruitment and retention are held focusing on all vacant posts in CDNTs.
- A bursary initiative with the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Letterkenny and Coventry University has been put in place funded by HSE Community Services Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo. A total of twenty three candidates have been awarded the Bursary supporting the areas of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Dietetics. HSE Community Services Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo have committed to funding this bursary scheme for three years to support the recruitment of suitably qualified Health and Social Care Professions qualifying as Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Dietitians at degree level from Coventry University, having completed initial studies at Letterkenny ATU. The graduates will receive a bursary on the basis of accepting a contract of work with Community Services Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo. Five bursary applicants sponsored by the HSE in 2023 have graduated in 2024 and are due to commence in Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy positions in CDNTS across the area in the coming weeks.

Children are provided with equipment on a case-by-case basis, and this is determined by assessments completed by the CDNT Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists. Equipment provision is ongoing and whilst delays in supply of certain specialised and/or bespoke equipment are encountered on occasion, equipment is typically provided as soon as possible.

Nationally, the HSE has developed a Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026 Disability Services for Children and Young People, which 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 sets out the overall aim for Children’s Disability Services, provided by the HSE and its partner agencies; i.e., 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.

The Roadmap contains a detailed plan of SMART (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) actions under the following headings:

1. Integrated Services between Disabilities, Primary Care, CAMHS and Tusla

2. CDNT Service Access and Improvement including AON
3. Workforce
4. Communication and Engagement with Children and Families, and with Staff
5. Engagement with Education and Support for Special Schools.

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

Yours sincerely,



Edel Quinn
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Community Services Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo
Seirbhísi Pobail An Cabhán, Dún na nGall, Liatroim, Muineachán & Sligeach