



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.

31st October 2024

Deputy Pearse Doherty,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pearse.doherty@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Doherty,

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: 39466/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if further funding will be provided to deal with the problems with CDNTs in County Donegal, such as long waiting lists and the high number of vacancies in CDNTs; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

In 2021, the remainder of ninety-one multidisciplinary CDNTs, now 93 CDNTs, were established in 96 Network areas to provide services and supports for all children, from birth to 18 years of age, with complex needs, within a defined geographic area.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for over 42,000 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow. However, there are significant challenges for CDNTs including:

- Significant staffing vacancies
- Growth in numbers of children with complex need as a result of their disability.
- Growth in demand for Assessment of Need, diverting further resources away from interventions

Staffing and Recruitment

Since 2019, more than 610 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. These posts have been assigned to teams based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area. This figure includes 190 posts provided in 2022 as well as an additional 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.



The attached National Report 2023, Children’s Disability Network Team Staff Census and Workforce Review, October 2023 gives a picture of the staff working in all of our children’s disability teams and the vacancy levels on October 11th 2023.

This report informs that there are 2,255.14 approved WTE for the CDNTs in 2023. An analysis of the data from 2022 and 2023 demonstrates an increase of 7% in the number of approved posts and a 3% increase in the CDNT workforce.

Please see the Table below.

Year	Approved WTE	Filled WTE	% Change Approved WTE	% Change Filled WTE
2021	1,892.38	1,367.88	100%	100%
2022	2,102.62	1,395.30	11%	2%
2023	2,255.14	1,437.91	7%	3%

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 which report 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 responsibility for driving the delivery of 21 targeted retention and recruitment actions for all CDNTs.

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.

Estimates Process and Multi Annual Investment

Each year the HSE participates in the Estimates Process with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and makes a submission for additional monies to meet the health and social care needs of the population it services.

The Disability Service makes submissions for additional funding for all services including Day, Residential, Respite, Home Support/PA hours, Multi-Disciplinary Posts and Neuro Rehab monies as a key element of its submission. Any new funding secured is allocated to the CHOs to provide services to those with the greatest need (priority basis).

The HSE makes every effort to secure multi-annual investment for services via the Estimates process and is very conscious of the need to deliver disability policy on a more sustainable footing given the significant levels of need for increased and more effective services and supports to enable people with a disability to live independent lives in their own community.

While Budget 2025, published on Tuesday the 1st October 2025, announced a funding allocation of €25.76 billion to the Department of Health, the granular detail regarding the allocation of funding for various services will not be known until the Service Plan for 2025 is published.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

