



Oifig an Stiúirthóir 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.

23rd October 2024

Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: padraig.osullivan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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: 40465/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the level of investment in CDNTs since 2020 to date, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter

PQ: 40469/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the average cost of hiring 100, 200, 300, 400 HSCP assistants for CDNTs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

HSE Response

93 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 over 42,000 (as per August CDNT Interm metrics) 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

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 National Report 2023, Children's Disability Network Team Staff Census and Workforce Review, October 2023 gives a picture of the staff working in our children's disability teams 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, now in its implementation phase, has established 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 developing a recruitment strategy for all CDNTs regardless of the Lead Agency; Retention of existing CDNT staff; Deployment of Students/Trainees/New Graduates; and Development of Existing Staff.

Investment in CDNTs

In 2021, €7m was allocated for 100 posts for PDS for children and €6.1m for 85.49 posts allocated at that time to protect the in-school services provided in some special schools.

2022 €8.2m was allocated for 190 posts for PDS children

2023 €11.5m was allocated for 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.

The Roadmap actions will optimise the use of existing budgets including time-related savings whilst additional funding requirements outlined below will be progressed through the Estimates and budgetary processes. Additional capital and infrastructural requirements will be informed by development of the CDNTs National Capital Plan by Q1 2024 (Action 2.17).

This is a critical part of a two and half year commitment over 2023 - 2026 to enhancing the staffing levels on CDNTs to meet the needs of children and families.



<p style="text-align: center;">2023 Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €11m (Budget 2023) to implement the Special Schools initiative • Additional €11.5m to implement the Waiting List Initiative to provide diagnostic assessments for those children on waiting lists 	<p style="text-align: center;">2024 Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €6.0m for additional 78 WTE paediatric posts to Primary Care CHNs to build service capacity to meet the needs of children with disabilities with non-complex need) • Funding to drive the Roadmap Service Improvement Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Service Improvement Lead • 9 CHO Service Improvement Leads
<p style="text-align: center;">2025 Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2025), half year costs* • €12.5m for 300 Therapy Assistant posts* 	<p style="text-align: center;">2026 Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2025), full year costs* • €12.55m for additional 180 CDNT posts (2026) half year costs* (FYC requires additional 12.55m in 2027)

* This is a critical part of a two and half year commitment over 2023 – 2026 to enhancing the staffing levels on CDNTs to meet the needs of children and families.

With regard to the average cost of hiring 100, 200, 300, 400 HSCP assistants for CDNTs, the full year cost of a therapy assistant at mid point on the current salary scale, including pay and non pay costs, is approximately € 48,167 (total full year cost).

For 100, 200, 300, 400 HSCP therapy assistants, this would be €4,817,600, €9,633,400, €14,452,800 and €19,270,400 Respectively.

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 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 are facilitating 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

