



Press Release- Monday 9 October 2023

*****Statement under strict embargo until 12.01am Monday 9 October 2023 please *****

Five representative HSCP organisations unite to voice safety concern over Children's Disabilities Services amid calls for consultation

- **Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Social Workers, Physiotherapists and Psychologists express concerns regarding safety of Children's Disability Services**
- **Unprecedented joint statement highlights level of concern over clinical governance and risk management**
- **Groups say their ability to deliver appropriate services is in jeopardy**

Five professional organisations (AOTI, IASLT, IASW, ISCP, PSI*) representing Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Social Workers, Physiotherapists, and Psychologists have issued a joint statement to express their concern over the safety of Children's Disability Services within the HSE.

Children's disability services are for children and young people up to 18 years who have complex needs. The organisations voicing their concerns are included in the children's disability network teams (CDNT) providing specialised support and services for children who have a disability and complex health needs associated with their disability. The unprecedented joint statement reads:

“The AOTI, IASLT, IASW, ISCP and PSI have significant concerns in relation to clinical governance, risk management, the erosion of professional autonomy and HSCP career structures within Children's Disability Services. This significantly impacts on our members' abilities to deliver services to children with disabilities.

Of particular concern are governance pathways where individual Health and Social Care Professionals (HSCP) are not reporting to a discipline-specific manager who has an inherent understanding of their specialised roles.

We are also concerned that the development and reconfiguration of disability services may lead to HSCPs being asked to develop services, or work without the appropriate discipline-specific experience or supervision. This ultimately affects the safety of services being delivered to children and their families.

The issues highlighted here have a direct impact on staff retention and recruitment in disability services, which have significant waiting lists in the first instance.

Meaningful and timely consultation with our organisations is required regarding current and future delivery of Children's Disability Services. As professional organisations, we have previously highlighted these issues to the Chief Clinical Officer, HSE and the Oireachtas. Appropriate and urgent action is required – we stand ready and willing to assist.” <ENDS>

Notes to Editor

The Health and Social Care Professions (HSCP) are the second largest clinical grouping of the healthcare workforce. The organisations supporting this statement are:

AOTI – [Association of Occupational Therapists](#)

IASLT – [Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists](#)

IASW – [Irish Association of Social Workers](#)

ISCP – [Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists](#)

PSI – [Psychological Society of Ireland](#)

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