

**As read out by Pat Kenny, 25 January 2006**

I have not listened to the last part of the show yet so I am going on hearsay, but the two texts as related to me ironically highlight the real problem with the provision of all therapies in the school.

Text 1. that some young one qualified in Limerick last year and cannot get a job due to the cap on postings.

Well , in answer to that Who is responsible for that cap?, ultimately. And where do they live? No one wants to own up to that one and it is about time we had the name of the individual responsible for the cap, and took direct action on campaigning towards them.

Text 2 (again anecdotally) That 100 speech therapists are coming on line in 2007.

Well, firstly, what are we supposed to do until then with our non verbal or behaviorally challenged due to communication difficulties children????

Just keep apologizing to our friends and handing out betadine (for their injuries)

And secondly, how do we know that the 100 new grads will stay in Ireland?

Fact is that Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the U.S.A are offering great packages at international recruitment fairs held here in Ireland to try to lure clinical therapists. And when these packages include accommodation, **Sun**, transport, great wages and more importantly a full compliment of staff, where do you think these grads are going to go? Not to a Health Board that expects them to work with twice the number of clients, 90% of whom have advanced communication deficits due to a lack of service provision in the past.

My one experience with the H.S.E "recruitment drive" involved a fourth year trinity speech student (who worked for me), waiting an agonizing 6 months to find out if she had the position she had applied for. As this was a contract to work for the H.S.E for ONE YEAR in return for help with her final year tuition fees and expenses this was outrageous. She didn't know if she would have to work part time in this final year in order to support herself and complete her qualification **FOR SIX MONTHS**.

If an overseas recruiter had swooped in and offered her a package it would have meant only 29 graduates available to Ireland instead of 30 that year, For all of Ireland. And of those 29 at least one was only doing speech because they didn't have the scores to get into medicine and was going to switch over, AND of the remainder, How many want to work in autism?

Release **have** qualified speech therapists ready and waiting to come and work in what is a world first in consultative parent child speech therapy. It is not a replacement for an on site adequately supported clinical team but a worthwhile and essential stop gap. And to answer the xenophobic, these therapists are not coming from America to take Irish Jobs permanently. They are coming to help Irish children fulfill their potential until the H.S.E gets their finger out and starts looking at who exactly they are meant to be accountable to, other than themselves.

I am a parent of TWO AUTISTIC CHILDREN, it is 2.15 in the morning and I cannot sleep for worrying about this.  
Lisa Domican