



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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23rd April 2019

Deputy Carol Nolan
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: carol.nolan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Nolan

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 16526/19

To ask the Minister for Health the additional amount of funding allocated for personal assistants for persons with disabilities in each budget since 2016.

HSE Response

The HSE provides a range of assisted living services including Personal Assistant to support individuals to maximise their capacity to live full and independent lives.

Services are accessed through an application process or through referrals from public health nurses or other community based staff. Individual's needs are evaluated against the criteria for prioritisation for the particular services and then decisions are made in relation to the allocation of resources. Resource allocation is determined by the needs of the individual, compliance with prioritisation criteria, and the level of resources available. As with every service there is not a limitless resource available for the provision of PA services and while the resources available are substantial they are finite. In this context, services are discretionary and the number of hours granted is determined by the available resources and other support services already provided to the person.

In the normal course of service delivery, there will be on-going reviews throughout the year to ensure that if needs change the service provided will address this change within available resources. An individual's PA hours may be adjusted following a service review where service demand can result in one individual's service being reduced in order to address priority needs of other people with disabilities within that community.

PA Services, in the main, are provided through a range of voluntary service providers. The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through non-statutory sector service providers.

Current Level of Service

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) available to persons with disabilities. The table below provides data for PA Services delivered to people with a disability in 2013,

2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. The HSE has consistently, year on year, increased the number of hours of PA Service delivered to people with a disability. In the 2019 National Service Plan, the HSE's priority is to provide 1.63 million hours of personal assistance to 2,535 people with a disability, representing an increase of 170,000 hours over the 2018 target of 1.46 million hours.

Figures for PA Services Delivered to People with a Disability

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
PA Services – Number of Hours	1,291,070	1,335,759	1,482,492	1,510,116	1,516,727	1,630,000
PA Services – No. People availing of service	2,057	2,224	2,369	2,427	2,470	2,535

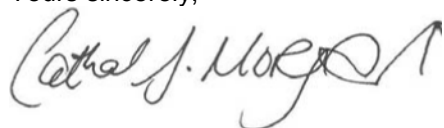
People with disabilities are now living longer and living with a range of complex needs. In line with national policy and Transforming Lives, the focus in recent years has been to enable people with disabilities to live lives of their choosing. The provision of Personal Assistant hours is an essential component of this.

No additional funding has been provided for this service to the HSE since 2008. The increase in PA and Home Support reflects the increased provision of 'in-home' respite (using enhanced PA and Home Support), in comparison with residential respite, which has seen reduced activity in recent years due to the closure of a number of respite beds following HIQA inspections. The reduced activity in this metric is compensated by an increase in Home Support and PA hours.

The increase in PA & Home Support Hours also reflects the responsive nature of the service provided and takes account of the fluctuation of assessed need over time as individuals needs change e.g. taking account of increased / reduced demand at certain times of the year, holiday periods, respite periods, hospital stays etc. PA hours are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the service is at all times responsive to clients needs and that the hours available are allocated appropriately and in a timely manner.

The need for increased services is acknowledged and the HSE continues to work with agencies to explore various ways of responding to this need in line with the budget available.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**