



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Community Operations,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369

Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

5th July 2019

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 27351/19

To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost of providing an additional 500,000 hours of the personal assistant scheme.

HSE Response

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

The PA works on a one to one basis, in the home and/or in the community, with a person with a physical or sensory disability. A vital element of this personalised support is the full involvement of the individual (service user) in planning and agreeing the type and the times when support is provided to them, supporting independent living must enhance the person's control over their own life. Article 19 of the UN Convention states that disabled people should live where they wish and with whom they wish. That they should enjoy a range of community support services including personal assistance. That they should enjoy community life and its opportunities on an equal basis to non-disabled people and they should not be subject to isolation or segregation.

Access to PA Services

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. 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. Preschool children with disabilities may access additional supports through the DCYA's Access &

Inclusion Model (AIM) for preschools. Likewise, the National Council for Special Education may provide Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to support children with complex needs in school.

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

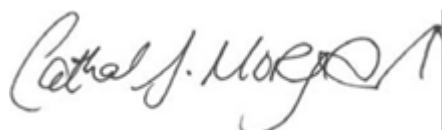
The need for increased services is acknowledged and the HSE continues to work with agencies to explore various ways of responding to this need in line with the budget available.

To provide further support to understanding the future service need for personal Assistance and Home Support, the Health Research Board provide planning analysis through databases for people with a disability. This is a key planning tool in respect of current service provision and future service needs which are used by the DOH and the HSE. In line with the information available from the National Disability Databases reports and local waiting lists, in excess of 376 people will require Home Support services in the future and 291 people are listed as awaiting PA services. There is an important caveat here in terms of the scale of need in this area in so far as there is no mandatory requirement to register personal need via the National Disability Databases, therefore, these estimates are not to be taken as reflective of actual need for PA services.

Estimated Cost

The HSE can confirm that in excess of €32 million is spent on the provision of PA services annually. The HSE estimates in 2019 that approximately €12.2 million would be required to provide an additional 500,000 extra personal assistant hours.

Yours sincerely,



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



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service