



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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6th August 2020

Deputy Pauline Tully
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Dear Deputy Tully

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 20366/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of personal assistant hours availed of by county and month in 2018, 2019 and to date in 2020 respectively, in tabular form; if he will increase the number of personal assistant hours; the timetable for this increase; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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.

PA Services are provided either directly by the HSE or through a range of voluntary service providers. The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through non-statutory sector service providers.

Services are accessed through an application process or through referrals from public health nurses or other community based staff. Individuals' 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 home support 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 other support services already provided to the person/family.

The tables on the next page provide details of the number of hours of service delivered and the number of people with a disability in receipt of services in 2018 and in 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data for PA Services Q1 2020 is still being collated and validated. We are hoping that we will have validated data for Q1 and Q2 by early September 2020.

Table 1 - PA Services for Persons with a Disability 2018

	Number of Adults with a Physical and Sensory Disability in Receipt of PA Services		Number of Hours PA Services Delivered	
CHO	2018		2018	
National Total	2,553		1,636,883	
CHO Area 1	252		143,808	
CHO Area 2	464		303,577	
CHO Area 3	431		320,161	
CHO Area 4	430		123,681	
CHO Area 5	431		180,729	
CHO Area 6	9		21,762	
CHO Area 7	47		38,409	
CHO Area 8	269		185,639	
CHO Area 9	220		319,118	

Table 2 - PA Services for Persons with a Disability, 2019

	Number of Adults with a Physical and Sensory Disability in Receipt of PA Services		Number of Hours PA Services Delivered	
CHO	2019		2019	
National Total	2548		1,652,030	
CHO Area 1	253		140,537	
CHO Area 2	460		306,516	
CHO Area 3	427		334,386	
CHO Area 4	439		128,786	
CHO Area 5	422		162,204	
CHO Area 6	9		21,145	
CHO Area 7	48		58,126	
CHO Area 8	271		189,545	
CHO Area 9	219		310,784	

Increasing Service Provision

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. Please note that as the National Disability Databases are not mandatory it is quite possible there is an under reporting of the need.

The HSE estimates that in 2019 approximately €12.2 million would have been required to provide an additional 500,000 extra personal assistant hours. However, this was prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; the HSE, in conjunction with Service Providers are currently working on service resumption plans and will have more information in respect of revised costs when that process is complete.

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

Prior to COVID-19, the HSE was committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Support Services available to persons with disabilities. In the 2020 National Service Plan, the HSE's priority was continue to deliver high quality PA and Home Support to approximately 10,000 people with disabilities including 1.67 million PA hours and 3.08 million Home Support hours.

In preparing for and responding to COVID-19 and to fully align with Public Health guidance as recommended via the NPHET, the HSE and its partner service providers put in place a range of measures, which included the prioritisation of vital residential and home support services whilst curtailing or closing certain services such as day services, as well as certain clinical supports in order to; a) prioritise essential public health services at CHO level and b) ensure continued delivery of the referenced residential and home supports provision. I should note that in the absence of regular access to some service and supports, CHOs and service providers have tried to maintain services that can be delivered safely; providing outreach and telecare solutions, using technology where possible; and using creative and innovative models of care to support service users, both adults and children.

Roadmap for Reopening

Processes are underway in order to plan for the reintroduction of non-Covid services. In that regard the HSE has now developed a number of important guidance documents to assist disability services. These are now available on the link below and are as follows:

1. Framework for Resumption of Adult Day Services;
2. Reshaping Disability Services From 2020 & Beyond

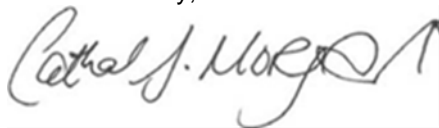
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

It is important to note that the above guidance is interim and subject to change in line with the overall management of the Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with contemporary Public Health Guidance.

The HSE continues to plan the re-establishment of vital non-covid supports and services. This includes very careful and detailed work on the part of the Disability Sector with national guidance and will result in directing how all funded agencies can deliver services on a medium to long-term basis. Plans have to comply with guidance as set out by the National Public Health Emergency Team as well as Public Health specialists in the HSE.

The Disability Sector is re-establishing a number of structures including the National Consultative Forum as well as other operational structures that will co-ordinate and support the sector as we continue to navigate this pandemic and make every effort to deliver supports and services in line with Public Health Guidance.

Yours sincerely,



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