



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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Deputy Verona Murphy,  
Dail Eireann,  
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Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Murphy,

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: 35738/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health the breakdown of the disabilities sector budget; the percentage of the budget that will be allocated specifically to transport for service users within the sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

In 2020, Disability Services has been allocated c. €2 billion to provide a range of services throughout the country across all CHO Areas and is spent in line with nationally agreed policy for disability services, whilst at the same time endeavouring to maximise value. Services include Residential and Respite Services, Day Services, PA and Home Support Services, and Therapeutic Supports. The table below provides a breakdown of the total spend over the last two years by service area.

Service area	2019 Funding €000	2020 Funding €000	2020 funding %
Residential Places	1,185,355	1,254,923	61%
Day Services	433,254	477,382	23%
Respite	56,212	70,677	3%
PA & Home Support	84,909	94,885	5%
Multidisciplinary Support (WTEs)	88,557	98,704	5%
Other Community Services & Supports	55,338	57,929	3%
	1,903,625	2,054,500	100%

**Transport Provision**

The provision of transport services is not part of core services within disability services. As a general rule public transport should be used in all circumstances where it is an option. This is in keeping with the principle of mainstreaming with a clear focus on ensuring persons with a disability have access to the normal range of services and participate in community life as far as possible. It must be noted that in general, day service users are in receipt of disability allowance and are automatically entitled to the Free Travel Pass, so there should be no additional cost burden at an individual level.

In regard to developments to meet the day service needs of school leavers each year, all new service locations under development are located as close as possible to where people reside so as to reduce the travel time for each person and enable them to be more connected with their own local community.

Funding is not provided for the transportation of young people to and from day services. However when all other options are exhausted and a person cannot avail of a day service because they do not have transport to attend, the service provider is advised to use some of the service money to cover the transport costs – this usually results in the provision of a reduced quantum of service .

The HSE intends to liaise with the National Transport Authority and disability service providers to explore ways in which the Authority's services could assist people with disabilities. The National Transport Authority has a total of 17 Transport co-ordinating units called Local Link which provide safe secure and reliable Public Transport services in local and rural areas of Ireland through a combination of scheduled Public Transport services and door to door services. The HSE plans to explore the opportunities these units may provide to people with disabilities to access day services and participate in the social, educational and economic life of their local communities.

### **Additional funding;**

The HSE and disability service providers recognise the critical need and importance of disability supports for people and their families. The impact of COVID-19 on people's lives has and continues to be very significant. Our collective aim is to restore services and ensure continuity of services in a safe way and in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies.

In this context, we welcome the recent announcements from the Government of additional funding for Disability Services:

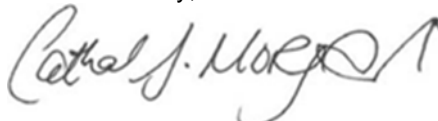
- An additional €100 million secured for Disability Services in the recent budget.
- €10 million is being made available to support the resumption of day services and enhanced home support services for disability service users. The €10 million funding is being drawn down from the National Action Plan on COVID-19 - €7.5 million will increase the level of day service provision and €2.5 million will provide intensive support packages for children and young people with complex/high support needs.
- €20 million in one-off grants will be provided to reform disability services, build the capacity of disability organisations and to improve the quality of life of those who rely on these services.
- €7.8 million has been allocated by Sláintecare to facilitate the HSE and its funded service providers to address the overdue Assessments of Need.

With regard to day service provision, since September 2020 there has been two allocations of funding aimed to try an increase the quantum of service provision. €5m was allocated for the following:-

- To refurbish buildings and thereby increase the physical capacity available for location based day service supports.
- To provide increased transport services to enable people to access day service locations.
- To acquire short term arrangements with Sports Clubs, Community Centres etc to acquire additional space to enable people access more time at locations.

€7.5m as outlined above was allocated by the Department of Health to enable those day service staff that have been redeployed to residential services to return to their day service locations and provide more support for the 14,000 day service recipients that live at home with their families

Yours sincerely,



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