



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

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Deputy Sorca Clarke,  
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Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

**PQ 31971/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health the rate of pay for personal assistants in each CHO area that work with disabled persons to ensure they live independent lives.*

**PQ 31972/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health if there is a standard hourly rate paid to agencies that employ personal assistants to work with disabled persons to ensure they live independent lives*

**PQ 31973/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health his plans to introduce a standardised rate of pay for all personal assistants employed to work with disabled persons in assisting them live independent lives.*

**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 through Private Providers or through a range of voluntary 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.

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.

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.

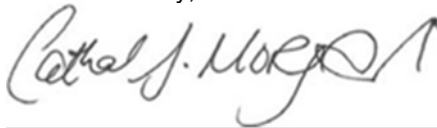
### **Rates of Pay**

The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through non-statutory sector service providers. In this regard, the bulk of the PA Service is delivered by Private Providers or Voluntary Service Providers funded under Section 39 of the Health Act. The rates these Providers pay their staff are not aligned to public pay scales; rather they relate to historical/legacy pay rates that the Providers have agreed with their staff. It is not within the gift of the HSE to determine these pay rates. So, while we would not identify different grades that act as PAs, there may be differences in the rates of pay that the Providers pay their staff who carry out the work of a PA.

### **Standardised Process for Accessing PA Services**

The HSE acknowledges the valuable role of PA Services in supporting the person with a disability to realise the entitlements set out in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). As Ireland has now ratified the UN Convention, it will be necessary to have a policy on the provision of PA services with an agreed definition, criteria for accessing the service, assessment process and an indication of the level of support that can be provided, and standard rates of pay for PA Assistants. In this context, the HSE is about to establish a Workstream under the auspices of the National Disability Operations Team to progress this Service Improvement development. This will lead to a clear national standard application process for PA Services as well as governance procedures.

Yours sincerely,



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