



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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18th September 2020

Deputy Cian O'Callaghan,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: cian.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

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 22350/20

To ask the Minister for Health his plans for a national plan to provide care for persons with disabilities; if his attention has been drawn to the number of parents in their 70's, 80's and 90's that are the primary caregiver to their children with a disability; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE is aware that the rate of disability has risen in Ireland over the last number of years with an additional 47,796 or 13.5% of the population now reporting at least one disability (Census 2016). This is an increase of 8% since 2011. The rate of those aged 65 years and over with a reported disability has risen by 20,319 to 9.5% since 2011. People are living longer and adults with a disability have age-related illnesses and conditions. In addition, more people with a disability have more complex needs. Around 15% of over-60s with intellectual disabilities live with family members, usually with sibling or parents. Given the ages of those involved, most of these arrangements will not be sustainable.

This change in demographics, increased life expectancy and changing needs for those with both a physical and sensory disability, and an intellectual disability has led to a significant increase in the need for disability services across all settings. This includes day supports, residential and respite services, personal assistant and home support services.

Disability services focus on enabling people with disabilities to achieve their full potential, living ordinary lives in ordinary places, as independently as possible while ensuring that the voices of service users and their families are heard, and that they are fully involved in planning and improving services to meet their needs.

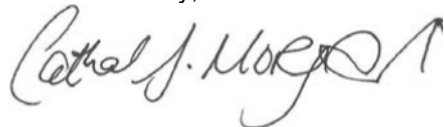
The HSE will in 2021 face a significant financial challenge in meeting essential demand, particularly in relation to residential placements for people with an intellectual disability. The HSE has worked collaboratively with the Department of Health in undertaking a Capacity Review of the Disability Sector to provide the framework within which services could develop over the coming decade. The HSE is aware that the Review accepts that significant Multi-Annual investment across all service types in the disability sector over the coming 15-year period is required in tandem with a fundamental programme of reform regarding existing delivery models.

The HSE is committed to working with stakeholders to deliver disability policy on a more sustainable footing given the significant levels of need for increased and more effective services and supports to enable people with a disability to live independent lives in their own community. The HSE acknowledges the key findings in the Capacity Review for year on year investment in additional Home Care and Community Supports and welcomes the Programme for Government's commitment to implementing same.

To meet the challenges from the increase in the number of people living with disability, the increase in age and life expectancy both of the person with the disability and their carer and the changing needs of people with a disability, collaborative working is required across the wider health and social care setting with the aim of improving access to services for all people with disability. It is important to recognise that the needs of people with a disability extend well beyond health service provision, and the health service will participate fully with other governmental departments and services in the development of cross-sectoral strategies to maximise access to services and supports for people with disabilities.

Disability services have a significant programme of reform, which is informing new models of service provision. Transforming Lives sets out the recommendations of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services in Ireland, 2012. It provides the framework for the implementation of the recommendations of Time to Move on from Congregated Settings, 2011 in respect of residential centres to support the transition of people from institutional settings to community-based living. The New Directions programme is improving day services and aims to meet the needs of school leavers and young people graduating from rehabilitation training. Taken together, the implementation of these programmes will enable us to maximise the use of existing resources and develop sustainable models of service provision with positive outcomes for service users, delivering best value for money and moving towards an inclusive model of community-based services and supports.

Yours sincerely,



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