



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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27th January 2021

Deputy Thomas Pringle,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: thomas.pringle@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Pringle,

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: 44798/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of disabled persons in receipt of a personal assistance service in 2020; the hours received by each disabled person leading their own PAS; 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 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.

Information regarding the number of disabled persons in receipt of a personal assistance service in 2020 is not available as yet; however, the following tables provide details of the number of hours of service delivered and the number of people with a disability in receipt of services up to end Q3 in 2020. Data for these metrics are collated on a quarterly basis, one month in arrears.

Table 1 - PA Services for Persons with a Disability, up to Q3 2020

	Number of Adults with a Physical and Sensory Disability in Receipt of PA Services	Number of Hours PA Services Delivered
CHO	Up to Q3 2020	Up to Q3 2020
National Total	2,599	1,293,183
CHO Area 1	232	91,899
CHO Area 2	449	239,234
CHO Area 3	445	249,505
CHO Area 4	423	104,839
CHO Area 5	390	122,240
CHO Area 6	31	21,786
CHO Area 7	105	78,266
CHO Area 8	294	138,175
CHO Area 9	230	247,240

The level of service delivered is varied to ensure that each client's needs are reflected; therefore, there is no average agreed number of PA hours per person. While many individuals are adequately provided for by their current level of support, it is recognised that many would benefit from more support hours.

The following table outlines the average number of PA hours delivered in 2020, broken down by number of hours per week per individual. Please note that this metric is collated once a year and the tally of people outlined below may vary slightly from the numbers in receipt of PA Services highlighted above.

	1-5 PA hours per week	6-10 PA hours per week	11-20 PA hours per week	21-40 PA hours per week	41-60 PA hours per week	60+ PA hours per week
No. People availing of service	1,021	568	435	263	61	73

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

Prior to the public health emergency with regard 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/PA 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

In the context of the Governments Resilience & Recovery Framework (2020 – 2021), the HSE regards the provision of disability services as essential to maintaining a response to people with a disability. All disability services must follow public health guidance in this area, including the prevention and management of COVID-19 related infection. The HSE and its funded disability partners will continue to provide PA and Home Support in line with public health guidance and direction and having regard to the availability of staffing resources.

Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which provides updates and guidance for disability service providers, including 'service resumption planning guidance'.

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

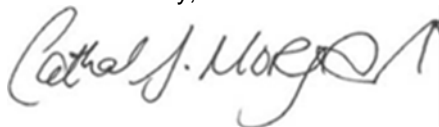
Attention is also drawn to the following important web links which provides up to date information resources in respect of covid.

www.hspc.ie

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

The HSE and 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 in a safe way and in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies and we will continue to work with service users and their families/carers to ensure that we achieve this aim.

Yours sincerely,



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