



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

12th April 2021

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Dear Deputy Harkin

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 16108/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will increase funding to an organisation (details supplied) in order to extend its services to those over the age of 65 years; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details supplied; Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.

HSE Response

The majority of disability service provision in Ireland has historically and continues to be provided by voluntary agencies including Acquired Brain Injury Ireland. These are funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act 2004. Some of these organisations can be characterised as systemically challenged in terms of financial sustainability. This was the case prior to the onset of the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

It is important to note that the HSE, prior to COVID-19, put measures in place in order to support vulnerable provider organisations, including delivery of a national service improvement programme. Additionally, the HSE and the Department of Health were developing options in terms of immediate as well as long-term policy considerations.

In 2020 ABII received an additional €950K from National Disability Services. This support was given as per norm and was separate to any COVID-19 issues.

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABII)

ABII is a Section 39 voluntary organisation which was set up in June 2000 in response to the need for services for people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). ABII aims to enable people with ABI to live an independent life in the community, by providing and maintaining a supportive living environment.

ABII works in partnership with the HSE to provide a range of flexible and tailor made services for people with acquired brain injury, in direct response to local identified needs. Services provided by ABII nationwide include:

- Fourteen Assisted Living Services;
- Home & Community Rehabilitation / Outreach Services;
- Day Resource Services;
- Family Support Services / Home Liaison / Social Work;
- Psychological Services; and
- Acquired Brain Injury Awareness Information, Training and Education Programmes.



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

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ABII is funded under Section 39 of the Health Act and subject to Service Arrangements. The agency received funding from the HSE of €11,925,675 in 2020 (separate from additional funding given). The HSE recognises the value of ABII's services to people with ABI, however, further increases in funding can only be considered within the parameters and scope of funding available to the HSE.

ABII are represented on the Neuro Rehabilitation National Steering Group through the Executive Director of the Neurological Alliance of Ireland. They also have seats on the working group tasked with developing the implementation framework and on the Managed Clinical Rehabilitation Network Demonstrator working group. The ethos of the Neurorehabilitation Strategy, which is reflected in the Implementation Framework, is that access to specialist neurorehabilitation services should be based on clinically assessed need not diagnosis.

Neuro Rehabilitation Implementation Framework

The Neuro-rehabilitation Strategy Implementation Framework (IF) was launched in February 2019. The overarching aim of the Strategy is the development of neuro-rehabilitation services to improve patient outcomes by providing safe, high quality, person-centred neuro-rehabilitation at the lowest appropriate level of complexity. This must be integrated across the care pathway, and provided as close to home as possible or in specialist centres where necessary.

While the Implementation Framework will support the delivery of services to persons with Acquired Brain Injury, it does not concentrate on any one specific diagnoses and aims to reach all people with neuro-rehabilitation requirements

These services should be configured into population based managed clinical rehabilitation networks (MCRNs). The MCRN, while an effective model in a number of European countries, is a new concept in Ireland. MCRNs are recognised as having the potential to bring together an appropriate range of primary, secondary and tertiary services to ensure equitable provision of high quality and clinically effective services. Considering the scale of fundamental change proposed it was decided to advance a demonstrator project across CHO 6 & 7 (which includes Peamount Healthcare, the Royal Hospital in Donnybrook and the National Rehabilitation Hospital) ahead of National roll-out. The learning from the demonstrator project will inform implementation of the Neuro-rehabilitation Strategy across each CHO.


Work on developing the necessary operational structures to support Network Functioning across the demonstrator area continues and the 'design phase' of the model is at an advanced stage. Funding for a 10-bed Neurorehabilitation Unit at Peamount Hospital has also been approved. Recruitment for this unit is currently underway and it is hoped that the unit will be operational by Q3 2020.

The capital project at the National Rehabilitation Hospital is also nearing completion and will be operational within in the coming weeks. The new building has capacity for 120 patients which is an uplift of approx 20 beds. Funding has also been approved for staffing to support this increased capacity.

The 2019 target for Neurorehabilitation, as outlined in the HSE Service Plan was to 'Commence a pilot project in CHO 6 and 7 to support the roll-out of the National Policy and Strategy for the Provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland 2011-2015'. As such, the 2019 target agreed in the Service Plan has been met as work on the demonstrator is progressing.

With respect to targets proposed in the Implementation Framework itself, targets have not all been met, however progress is being made across the CHO's with respect to identifying Leads and establishing Local Implementation Teams.

Yours sincerely



Bernard O Regan
Head of Disability Strategy and Planning