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Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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12th April 2021

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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 16962/21

To ask the Minister for Health the mechanisms in place to collect and examine data regarding rates of access to healthcare services by persons with disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The National Intellectual Disability (NIDD) and Physical and Sensory Disability (NPSDD) Databases were developed and introduced over a decade ago, as a mechanism to identify the unmet demand for support and future service needs in order to inform service planning. The databases were managed by the Health Research Board on behalf of the Department of Health and Annual Reports can be accessed from the following weblink: https://www.hrb.ie/publications/

The databases were consent based and required periodic updates through the export of large quantities of information. The NIDD and NPSDD were decommissioned in January 2018 and are being replaced by the Nability Ability Support System (NASS) which is currently being rolled out.

NASS is a national database that records information about disability-funded services that are received or required as a result of an intellectual disability, developmental delay, physical, sensory, neurological, learning, autism spectrum, speech/language disability arising from disease, disorder or trauma. Mental health as a type of disability is also recorded on NASS where an individual is in receipt of a disability-funded service. This may come about where the individual has more than one type of disability or where no suitable mental health service is available.

The purpose of NASS is to gather information to aid the planning, development and organisation of disability-funded services. A person is eligible to be registered on NASS if they receive or require (in the next 5 years) a disability-funded service. NASS will allow for key information to be collected on an ongoing basis in relation to the current and unmet support needs of all people with disabilities that engage with the disability sector.

In this context, NASS is a key planning tool in respect of current service provision and future service needs for people with a disability and has formed an important evidence basis for the Department of Health, with HSE support, to undertake a Capacity Review of the Disability Sector (i.e. a multi-annual investment resources needed for Disability going forward), to provide the framework within which services could develop over the coming decade. The HSE is aware that the Review accepts that significant 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.

Further details in relation to NASS and the latest data from NASS can be accessed at the following weblink: https://www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/disability-service-use-and-need/latest-data/

In addition to the development of NASS, the HSE Disability Operations Team in conjunction with the Health Research Board is developing an eHealth case management system that will provide for a single online case management and tracking tool for all day, residential and home support/ emergency respite services across all CHOs and for each funded service provider. This is due to be developed as part of NASS version 2.0 and will work to integrate disability data, whilst replacing existing systems such as the Occupational Guidance System (OGS), and the Disability Supports Application Management Tool (DSMAT), and provide comprehensive management information reporting dashboards to management within both CHOs and services.

It is recognised that the collection of data on current service provision, current unmet need and future need for supports is critical to inform service planning and delivery.

Yours sincerely,

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