



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Social Care Division,
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11th May 2022

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 20266/22

To ask the Minister for Health the budget that has been allocated to develop a protocol for the eligibility and allocation of personal assistant services based on a universally agreed definition as contained within the HSE Service Plan 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE provides a range of assisted living services including Home Support and Personal Assistant services to support individuals to maximise their capacity to live full and independent lives.

The role of a Personal Assistant (PA) is to assist a person with a disability to maximise their independence through supporting them to live in integrated settings and to access community facilities. The PA works on a one to one basis, in the home and/or in the community, with a person with a physical or sensory disability. A vital element of this personalised support is the full involvement of the individual (service user) in planning and agreeing the type and the times when support is provided to them, supporting independent living must enhance the person's control over their own life. Article 19 of the UN Convention states that people with a disability should live where they wish and with whom they wish. That they should enjoy a range of community support services including personal assistance. That they should enjoy community life and its opportunities on an equal basis to people without a disability and they should not be subject to isolation or segregation.

Access to PA Services

Services are accessed through an application process or through referrals from public health nurses or other community based staff. Individual's 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 PA services and while the resources available are substantial they are finite. In this context, services are subject to an



assessment and the number of hours granted is determined by the available resources and other support services already provided to the person/family.

In the normal course of service delivery, there will be ongoing reviews throughout the year to ensure that if needs change the service provided will address this change within available resources. An individual's PA hours may be adjusted following a service review where service demand can result in one individual's service being reduced in order to address priority needs of other people with disabilities within that community.

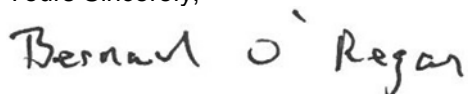
The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Support Services available to persons with disabilities. The HSE has consistently, year on year, increased the number of hours of PA and Home Support Services delivered to people with a disability.

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.

In accordance with the National Service Plan 2022, the HSE will develop a protocol for the eligibility and allocation of personal assistant services based on a universally agreed definition, in collaboration with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, people with disabilities and providers.

A working group is to be established that includes key internal and external stakeholders within HSE operations and clinical programme, as well as representatives from the voluntary sector, families and service users.

Yours Sincerely,



**Mr Bernard O'Regan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**

