



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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1st February 2022

Deputy John Brady
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: john.brady@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Brady,

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 63481/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of applications received for a physical care needs assessment in 2019, 2020 and 2021, by county in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 63482/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons awaiting a physical care needs assessment in 2021, by county in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

PA and Home Support Services

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

PA and Home Support Services are provided either directly by the HSE or through a range of voluntary service providers. The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through non-statutory sector 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.

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Support Services available to persons with disabilities. The table below provides data for PA & Home Support Services



delivered to people with a disability from 2014 - 2020. The HSE has consistently, year on year, increased the number of hours of PA and Home Support Services delivered to people with a disability.

Figures for PA and Home Support Services Delivered to People with a Disability 2014-2020

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
PA Services – Number of Hours	1,335,759	1,482,492	1,510,116	1,516,727	1,639,481	1,652,030	1,781,310
PA Services –No. People availing of service	2,224	2,369	2,427	2,470	2,535	2,551	2,673
Home Support – Number of Hours	2,614,967	2,777,569	2,928,914	2,930,000	3,138,939	3,036,182	2,939,541
Home Support – No. People availing of service	7,312	7,219	7,323	7,492	7,522	7,321	6,792

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

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.

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, respite services, and certain clinical & therapeutic supports.

The number of people in receipt of PA and Home Support services remained steady throughout the pandemic. The number of PA hours exceeded the NSP 2020 target by 6.7%, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, mainly as a result of additional PA hours being provided in lieu of other services. Home Support Services were 4.6% below target at year end, mainly due to the complexity involved in the provision of services due to COVID-19.

Activity Data for 2021

In the 2021 National Service Plan, the HSE's priority is to continue to deliver high quality PA and Home Support Services to 10,000 people with disabilities including 1.74 million PA hours and over 3 million Home Support Hours. This includes the allocation of an additional 40,000 PA hours in accordance with the NSP 2021.

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 Quarter 3, 2021.

The restoration and continuity of PA and Home Support services is underway in a safe way and while services are now operational in all areas, there is reduced capacity due to necessary infection prevention and control requirements.

It should be noted that several areas have not returned data in relation to these metrics for this period, so the figures presented show a data return rate of 90.6%. Notwithstanding the absence of activity data in some CHO Areas, the delivery of PA and Home Support Services has remained steady during 2021.

Table 1 - PA Services for Persons with a Disability, to end Quarter 3, 2021

	Number of Adults with a Physical and Sensory Disability in Receipt of PA Services	Number of Hours PA Services Delivered
CHO	To end Q3 - 2021	To end Q3 - 2021
National Total	2,457	1,191,768
CHO Area 1	235	94,186
CHO Area 2	480	260,441
CHO Area 3	464	258,243
CHO Area 4	289	91,534
CHO Area 5	367	89,790
CHO Area 6	21	21,555
CHO Area 7	100	78,726
CHO Area 8	278	133,890
CHO Area 9	223	163,403

Table 2 – Home Support Services for Persons with a Disability, to end Quarter 3, 2021

	Number of Adults with a disability in Receipt of Home Support Services	Number of Hours Home Support Services Delivered
CHO	To end Q3 - 2021	To end Q3 - 2021
National Total	6,636	2,071,465
CHO Area 1	646	263,055
CHO Area 2	1,077	161,817
CHO Area 3	465	165,810
CHO Area 4	626	192,759
CHO Area 5	819	161,666
CHO Area 6	560	273,855
CHO Area 7	766	256,731
CHO Area 8	1,088	411,811
CHO Area 9	589	183,962

Waiting Lists

Whilst there is currently no centrally maintained list of people awaiting these services, each Community Health Organisation Area would be aware of the presenting needs within each of the geographic areas. Following referral and assessment, available resources are allocated to clients with highest level of need.

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.

To provide further support to understanding the future service need for Personal Assistance and Home Support, the Health Research Board provide planning analysis through databases for people with a disability. This is a key planning tool in respect of current service provision and future service needs which are used by the DOH and the HSE. In line with the information available from the National Disability Databases reports and local waiting lists, in 2018, in excess of 376 people required Home Support services in the future and 291 people were listed as awaiting PA services. The Databases are being replaced by the NASS system which is currently being rolled out. 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, including people requiring PA and Home Support Services.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan

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