



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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10th August 2022

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: richard.boydbarrett@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Boyd Barrett,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ: 41502/22

To ask the Minister for Health the current spending on personal assistants; the increase that would be needed in order for Ireland to fulfil its commitment under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

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 - 2021. 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 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
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	1,700,309
PA Services – No. People availing of service	2,224	2,369	2,427	2,470	2,535	2,551	2,673	2,613
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	2,949,806
Home Support – No. People availing of service	7,312	7,219	7,323	7,492	7,522	7,321	6,792	6,902

Funding of PA Services

It is important to note that PA supports are funded alongside Home Support Service provision.

The table below details the funding allocated to PA and Home Support Services in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. Funding allocated has increased year on year.

Service area	Budget 2018	Final 2019	Final NSP 2020	Final NSP 2021	Final NSP 2022
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
PA & Home Support	80,957	84,909	93,885	100,613	109,809
Total Funding Allocated	1,772,300	1,903,625	2,049,500	2,209,719	2,347,380

New Developments for 2022

In accordance with the National Service Plan 2022, the HSE will deliver 120,000 additional hours of personal assistant supports and 30,000 additional hours of home supports to expand and enhance supports for people to live self-directed lives in their own communities (please see breakdown of additional hours by CHO Area, in the table below).

The HSE will also develop a protocol for the eligibility and allocation of personal assistant services based on a universally agreed definition, in collaboration with DCEDIY, people with disabilities and service providers.

CHO Area	Allocated No. Hours of PA	Allocated No. Hours of Home Support
CHO 1	10,176	2,544
CHO 2	11,652	2,913
CHO 3	9,924	2,481
CHO 4	17,376	4,344
CHO 5	13,008	3,252
CHO 6	9,528	2,382
CHO 7	17,628	4,407
CHO 8	15,492	3,873
CHO 9	15,204	3,801



With regard to the increase that would be needed in order for Ireland to fulfil its commitment under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 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.

Any estimates that may be completed regarding personal assistant services, would be based on the average costs per hour identified in 2022 – i.e: - the average allocation from 2022 HSE KPIs indicates that PA Services cost €27 per hour. However, this estimate is based on the average costs per hour identified in 2022 and does not take into account inflation or increased pay costs.

Disability Capacity Review to 2032 A Review of Disability Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements up to 2032.

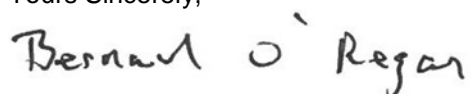
The HSE welcomes the publication of the Department of Health's "*Disability Capacity Review to 2032 A Review of Disability Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements up to 2032*".

The HSE has worked collaboratively with the Government in undertaking the Capacity Review of the Disability Sector to provide the framework within which services could develop over the coming decade.

The capacity review emphasises the importance of a planned approach to meeting current and future requirements and the critical need for a multi-annual current and capital funding programme to secure effective and timely delivery, at the most reasonable cost.

The Review accepts that significant investment across all health services over the period up to 2032 is required in tandem with a fundamental programme of reform. The HSE welcomes the work being done, lead by the Department of Health but involving other relevant Government Departments, to develop a comprehensive Action Plan to develop services on a "whole of Government" basis to meet current and future needs for disabled children and adults.

Yours Sincerely,



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

