



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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24<sup>th</sup> May 2022

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Dear Deputy Ward,

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 23130/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of personal assistance hours provided in 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter*

**PQ 23132/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the cost of increasing personal assistant hours by 10%, 15%, and 20% in 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 23133/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons in receipt of personal assistant hours in 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 23134/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the cost of increasing the number of persons in receipt of personal assistant hours by 10%, 15%, and 20% in 2023; 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. In this context, information regarding the breakdown of personal assistance for persons with vision impairment or indeed any other specific category of disability, is not collated.

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.

### Activity Data for 2021

Information regarding the number of personal assistance hours and the number of persons in receipt of personal assistant hours in 2022 will not be available until 2023.

As per the 2021 National Service Plan, the HSE's priority was 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 in 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 returned partial data in relation to these metrics for this period, so the figures presented show a data return rate of less than 100%. Notwithstanding the absence of activity data in some CHO Areas, the delivery of PA and Home Support Services remained steady during 2021; PA Services was below the target by -2.3% and Home Support Services was 2.0% below target at year end (data quarterly one month in arrears).

Table 1 - PA Services for Persons with a Disability, 2021

	Number of Adults with a Physical and Sensory Disability in Receipt of PA Services		Number of Hours PA Services Delivered
CHO	2021		2021
National Total	2,613		1,700,309
CHO Area 1	229		125,488
CHO Area 2	491		348,127
CHO Area 3	475		345,261
CHO Area 4	404		136,841
CHO Area 5	364		150,992
CHO Area 6	21		29,044
CHO Area 7	101		100,830
CHO Area 8	296		182,513
CHO Area 9	232		281,214

Table 2 – Home Support Services for Persons with a Disability, 2021



	Number of Adults with a disability in Receipt of Home Support Services	Number of Hours Home Support Services Delivered
CHO	2021	2021
<b>National Total</b>	<b>6,902</b>	<b>2,949,806</b>
CHO Area 1	742	373,219
CHO Area 2	1,081	232,883
CHO Area 3	465	202,384
CHO Area 4	532	246,788
CHO Area 5	811	328,376
CHO Area 6	560	369,394
CHO Area 7	766	345,918
CHO Area 8	1,088	557,936
CHO Area 9	857	292,907

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 on PA & Home Support Services costs from 2016 to end of 2020. It is not possible to separate the funding for PA from PA & home support.

Service area	2016 Funding €000	2017 Funding €000	2018 Funding €000	2019 Funding €000	2020 Funding €000	2020 funding %
<b>PA &amp; Home Support</b>	<b>€72.7m</b>	<b>€77.1m</b>	<b>80,957</b>	<b>84,909</b>	<b>94,885</b>	<b>5% of total</b>

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 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.


The additional cost of increasing funding for personal assistant supports for people with disabilities by 10% would be approximately €3.686m, by 15% would be €5.528m approximately and by 20% would be €7.372m approximately.

### 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. .

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

Yours sincerely



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