



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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24th May 2022

Deputy Mick Barry,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: mick.barry@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Barry,

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: 23556/22

To ask the Minister for Health if he will increase investment in the personal assistant services to ensure that all persons with disabilities who require assistance will have access to personal assistance services regardless of the CHO area they live in; 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.

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 %
PA & Home Support	€72.7m	€77.1m	80,957	84,909	94,885	5% of total

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

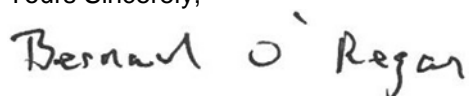
The need for increased services is acknowledged and the HSE continues to work with agencies to explore various ways of responding to this need in line with the budget available.

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,



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

