



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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26th June 2023

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: 27549/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated number of intensive home support packages for children with disabilities that will be required in 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE acknowledges the challenges in meeting the demand for children's disability services and is acutely conscious of how this impacts on children and their families.

There are ninety one Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) providing services for children with complex disability needs aged 0 – 18 years. CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team works closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities.

Regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend, every child with complex needs and their families have access to the full range of family centred services and supports of their CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports are provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

Home Support Services

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



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.

The Home Support service provides domestic and or personal care inputs at regular intervals on a weekly basis. Temporary relief is offered to the carer by providing a trained reliable care attendant to look after the needs of the person with the disability. The service provides support to the parents to enable them to spend quality time with the other siblings in the family. It also supports the individual with the disability in terms of their care plan, with particular attention on the personal needs of the individual. Home supports can be an alternative to residential care, where support to individuals in daily living can avoid the need for full time residential services.

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.

In 2021, €6m in funding was allocated to Intensive Support packages. 497 intensive support packages were put in place; this included 437 new packages and 60 packages approved in 2020 against additional Q4 funding, which were maintained in 2021.

In 2022, Disability Services developed 18 new intensive support packages and 19 new supported living packages.

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 is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant and Home Support Services to support 10,000 individuals to maximise their capacity to live full and independent lives and in 2022 the targets set in the NSP were exceeded with the delivery of 1.75 million hours of PA Services (above the target by +2.7%) and 3.37 million hours of Home Support Services (+8% above target for the year).

In accordance with the NSP 2023, the HSE has been allocated funding to provide a range of supports including:

- Support 18 delayed transfers of care in line with the Winter Plan. This includes new residential places and home care packages.

Whilst there is currently no centrally maintained list of people awaiting Home Support 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.

Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSMAT)

The HSE Disability Services has introduced a system called the Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSMAT), which enables Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) areas to record and manage requests for support and to ensure that the application process is equitable and transparent. The DSMAT provides a consistent listing process for each CHO Area by presenting a



detailed profile of the individuals (Adults & Children) who require funded supports outside of the current service quantum.

It captures detailed information on home and family circumstances and a detailed presentation profile of the individuals, including specialised profiles of behavioural intensity, key diagnoses, and complex support needs due to the extent and intensity of intellectual and/or physical & sensory disability.

It is important to note that in the absence of a statutory, legislative framework providing entitlement to services, the DSMAT is not a chronological waiting list. Rather, it is a support to the CHO area to feed into its decision making process around prioritisation of services subject to budgetary constraints. This means that services are allocated on the basis of greatest presenting need and associated risk factors.

The most recent information available, which is a demand profile, outside of current service quantum, shows that there are 1,997 applications for Non-Residential Services, such as PA, Home Support and Respite Services.

National Ability Support System (NASS)

NASS is a national database that records information about disability-funded services that are received or required as a result of an intellectual disability, developmental delay, physical, sensory, neurological, learning, autism spectrum, speech/language disability arising from disease, disorder or trauma. The purpose of NASS is to gather information to underpin the planning, development and organisation of disability-funded services. A person is eligible to be registered on NASS if they receive or require (now or within the next five years) a disability-funded service.

NASS is funded by the Department of Health and managed by the Health Research Board (HRB) and the latest reports can be found at the following link:

<https://www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/disability-service-use-and-need/latest-data/>

In accordance with the National Service Plan, the HSE continues to work closely with the HRB to fully implement the National Ability Supports System (NASS) and is committed to work with the Community Digital Oversight Group to develop disability information requirements within the Integrated Community Case Management System.

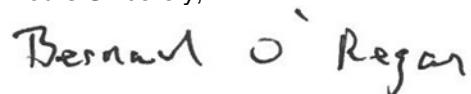
Future Planning

With regard to the estimated number of intensive home support packages for children with disabilities that will be required in 2024, the HSE will take part in the Estimates process during 2023 in advance of the publication of the 2024 Service Plan and Budget.

The Department of Health's 2021 Disability Capacity Review advises that up to €15 million per year by 2032 – equivalent to 600,000 additional hours - is needed to meet the requirements for Personal Assistants and Home Support.

Each CHO continues to actively manage applications for support from service users with high levels of acuity/ safeguarding risks, through active case-management and inter-agency cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,



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

