



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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9<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Deputy Michael Moynihan,  
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Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Moynihan,

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

**PQ: 25773/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if his Department has plans to improve access to personal assistant hours; 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.

While there is no centrally maintained waiting list for PA services, the local HSE CHO areas are aware of the needs in their respective areas and work with the local Service Providers to respond within the resources available.

Currently, each CHO has a process to manage applications and referrals for PA Services. Individual's needs are assessed against the criteria for prioritisation. 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 current level of PA service includes an over 15% increase in PA hours totalling 270,370 hours in the National Service Plans since 2020 as follows:

- 2020 = 40,000 additional hours of personal assistant supports



- 2021 = 40,000 additional hours of personal assistant supports
- 2022 = 120,000 additional hours of personal assistant supports
- 2023 = 70,370 additional personal assistant hours.

While many individuals are adequately provided for by their current level of support, it is also the case that many would benefit from more support hours if they were available.

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

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

Increased investment by Government in recent years is welcome. The HSE will lead the work to improve how the resource is allocated and used to provide this essential support for people to live an independent life.

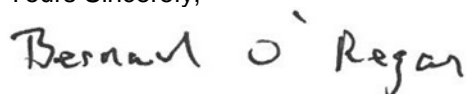
The HSE acknowledges the role of PA Services in supporting the person with a disability to realise the entitlements set out in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). As Ireland has now ratified the UN Convention it will be necessary to have a policy on the provision of PA services with an agreed definition, criteria for accessing the service, assessment process and an indication of the level of support that can be provided.

In this context, the HSE is in the process of establishing a Working Group on PA Services; work is underway to develop the Terms of Reference and proposed membership of the Working Group which is planned to commence in early Quarter 2, 2023.

The HSE has contributed to the development by Government of the Capacity Review of the Disability Sector (2020) and the draft Disability Action Plan 2023 – 2026. These set out the future service needs and how they might be addressed. They incorporate the dual development goals to (a) increase the range of hours available to individuals already in receipt of some PA support and (b) increasing the hours available to make the service available to more people.

This report will be used by the Working Group being established to improve this important service, as well as making a valuable contribution to the service planning process.

Yours Sincerely,



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

