



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
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19th October 2023

Deputy Paul Murphy,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: paul.murphy@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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: 43207/23

To ask the Minister for Health if he accepts that 200 additional multi-disciplinary staff are needed to uphold the fundamental rights of people with intellectual disabilities.

HSE Response

There has been a collective effort, nationally and regionally, to fundamentally reform how we deliver services for people with a disability and our commitment to uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability (UNCRPD). Under the Transforming Lives policy, this has been a driving force of strong collaborative efforts over many years and where real progress has and continues to be made.

The range of specialist disability services that are provided to circa 60,000 people with disabilities including intellectual disabilities, spans residential, home support and personal assistant services, respite services, day services, rehabilitative training and Children's Disability Services. The continued collaborative working by the HSE, the voluntary sector and the private sector ensured services are being delivered, including the delivery of new developments, throughout the year, with the result that in many of the KPI metrics the delivery exceeded the targets set in the NSP 2022 and delivery continues to be in line for target delivery in 2023.

The HSE Service Plan 2023 provides for a range of services to persons with disabilities and their families, with an assigned budget of approximately €2.6 billion:

However, the needs of people with a disability extend well beyond health service provision, and the health service participates fully with other Government departments and services in the development of cross-sectoral strategies to maximise access to services and supports for people with disabilities.



Wherever possible, people with disabilities are supported to live in the community and to access mainstream health and social care services. Specialist disability services focus on providing supports to people with more complex disabilities, and to complement the mainstream health and social care services provided to people with disabilities alongside the rest of the population. The development of specialist services is underpinned by some key principles including:

- Rights-based services aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Services provided in the community where people live
- Early intervention to maximise people's capacities
- Person-centred services supporting people's choice and control
- A strengths-based approach, recognising and supporting the inherent abilities of people with disabilities
- Coherent and integrated services and supports
- Services that are equitable and consistent
- Prioritisation on the basis of assessed need
- Services provided by interdisciplinary teams, networked regionally with other teams, and supported by enhanced services and supports where necessary.

The principle of 'mainstream first' requires that HSE-led services are developed in the context of supporting actions by Government departments in the areas of housing, transport, education, including higher education, employment and social protection.

In accordance with the National Service Plan 2023, the HSE has committed to:

- The provision of improved access to children's disability services and improved compliance with the statutory Assessment of Need process.
- Continuing to work with community support teams to provide safeguarding support to vulnerable adults.
- Improving the delivery of a range of specialist community-based disability services and increasing service capacity in the areas of day (including the provision of places for the 2023 school leavers and rehabilitation-training graduates), respite, multi-disciplinary, residential and personal assistant services using the resources available.
- Progressing the delivery of the Assessment of Need process in line with legislative obligations.
- The Stability and Sustainability Team will continue to focus on financial and governance challenges to develop proposals for a more sustainable model of services, extracting high level learning from its current programme of work to inform future service considerations, including policy where appropriate.
- Continuing the transition of people from institutional settings to community-based services in line with *Time to Move on from Congregated Settings* policy and the recommendations of *Wasted Lives: Time for a better future for younger people in nursing homes*.
- Supporting and helping to facilitate the transfer of functions of specialist community-based disability services from the DoH to the DCEDIY.

The HSE commits to the provision of:

- 2,102 WTEs to work on 91 Children's Disability Network Teams that will co-ordinate and provide support to children and young people with complex disability support needs. This includes the current 707 funded vacancies in the service. It also incorporates the commitment to delivering supports in Special schools for which 136 additional posts were provided for
- Provide 447 intensive respite support packages for children and young people with complex/high support needs focusing on families experiencing substantial levels of support need;



- Provide 8348 residential places to people with a disability (where 90% relates to those with intellectual disabilities and Autism).
- Over 21,390 people with disabilities will access rehabilitative training or day places and supports in over 800 locations throughout the country.
- 5,758 people with disabilities will avail of 129,012 overnight respite and 24,444 day only respite sessions
- 10,016 people with disabilities will avail of 4.89m hours of personal assistant/home support hours

The development of the Action Plan for Disability 2022-2025 will further determine the service developments, and the enabling factors, in the provision of person-centred services and supports.

The focus is on choice for the service user to enhance their opportunity to live a full life and to access the necessary services and supports. The policy landscape for this work is detailed and based on service user involvement and provides a very clear costed pathway for stable sustainable service development in the context of meeting our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and as underpinned by the Transforming Lives policy.

This work will be delivered through continued collaborative engagement with relevant government departments, service users and their families, service providers and representative bodies, and the National Clinical Programme for People with Disabilities.

Staff Recruitment

Disability Services are provided either directly by the HSE or through a range of voluntary and commercial service providers. The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through these non-statutory sector service providers.

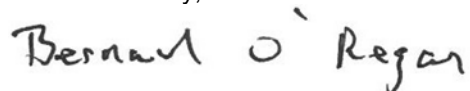
Recruitment in the HSE is conducted both nationally (through HR National Recruitment Service) and at CHO level by local recruitment teams.

All recruitment undertaken, focuses on campaigns to attract qualified and eligible candidates in an effort to increase the potential candidate pool. The HSE and Service Providers continue to explore a wide range of options and initiatives to enhance the retention and recruitment of essential staff across all aspects of the health services.

The HSE Careers Hub allows potential candidates to register their interest in specific areas and in turn, these individuals will be notified of all recruitment in those areas in which they have expressed their interest.

The HSE is operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe.

Yours Sincerely,



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

