



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Seirbhísí Míchumais Náisiúnta  
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15  
Áras Phlásóg na Rós, Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile,  
Páirc Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta,  
Caladh an Treoigh,  
Luimneach.

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
National Disability Services  
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15  
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6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne,  
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Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Wynne,

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: 7332/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if he plans to create a database for a centralised system to monitor and manage applications and referrals for PA service; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 9593/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if he will discuss the issues faced by service users with respect to agencies who contracted to deliver their PA 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.

Personal Assistant (PA) services provides 1 to 1 support to people with physical disabilities in their homes and communities by trained, professional Personal Assistants. The PA service facilitates a person's independence, improves their quality of life, provides access to education and employment, and supports them to participate in their local community. A PA support can range from a few hours a week to daily assistance. A vital element of this personalised support is the full involvement of the individual in planning and agreeing the type, times when support is provided to them and choosing the best way to use their allocated PA hours, to enable them to achieve maximum control over their life by tailoring their service to meet their unique support requirements.



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 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.

The DSMAT is not a chronological waiting list; 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.

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.

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 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 (UNCPRD). 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 has established a Personal Assistance Review Working Group. The HSE is committed to ensuring that the experience and voice of persons with lived experience of PA forms an active part in producing real change and at the highest level in terms of oversight structures.

## **Governance and Complaints**

Additional information has been added to the question concerning issues faced by service users. The service users should raise their concerns concerning the shortcoming in service provision that they are experiencing with the local HSE area.

Information regarding each area/county can be obtained at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/disabilityservicescounty.html>

## **Governance Framework**

As mentioned above, PA Services, in the main, are provided through a range of voluntary service providers. The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through non-statutory sector service providers.

The HSE has established a formal and robust Governance Framework to cover funding relationships with all Non-Statutory Agencies that are contracted to provide services on behalf of the HSE. This includes voluntary organisations



funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act. All funding arrangements with non-statutory agencies are formalised by complying with this Governance Framework which consists of Service Arrangements.

The completion of the Service Arrangement between the HSE and the Service Provider involves agreement on anticipated outcomes that the service will deliver, agreed performance management requirements/standards and reporting requirements.

Service Providers are bound to comply with the conditions of the Service Arrangement which includes performance monitoring and also the provision of a complaint policy and the management of complaints.

### **The HSE Your Service Your Say Policy.**

As mentioned in the Governance Framework for Service Providers outlined above, anyone who is being or was provided with a health or social service by the HSE or Service Provider or anyone seeking provision of such services, is entitled to make a complaint.

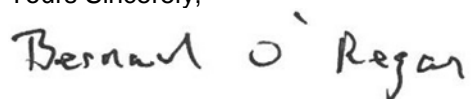
The Your Service Your Say, the Management of Service User Feedback for Comments, Compliments and Complaints is designed to be flexible, accessible and responsive to the needs of all service users and ensures that all feedback is acknowledged, reviewed and responded to within the agreed policy and legislative timeframes.

It is the right of service users to comment, compliment or complain about any of the services provided by the HSE or its Service Providers. Responding effectively to comments, compliments and complaints received and learning from them is key to providing high quality customer focused services. Best practice identifies what service users want when they provide feedback and the HSE has used this information to build on and enable a system which will meet these requirements.

Please see the link below for further information.

<https://www2.hse.ie/complaints-feedback/>

Yours Sincerely,



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

