



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

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30th January 2024

Deputy Violet Anne Wynne,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: violet-anne.wynne@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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: 4325/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question No. 173 of 12 October 2023, if the promised additional 70,370 PA hours were delivered in 2023; 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 indirectly through a range of voluntary and private 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.

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 (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 has established a Working Group on PA Services.

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.

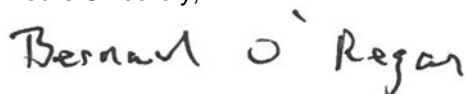
The HSE is also committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant and Home Support Services to support 10,000 individuals to maximise their capacity to live full and independent lives and in 2022 the targets set in the NSP were exceeded with the delivery of 1.75 million hours of PA Services (above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

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.

Outlined above, as per the National Service Plan, the HSE committed to deliver an additional 70,370 personal assistant hours in 2023 to expand and enhance the supports for people to live self-directed lives in the community. Activity data up to end of Quarter 2, 2023 indicates that we are in line to meet national target at year end. Due to the ongoing Forsa industrial Action, this is the most recent validated information available at this time.

Yours Sincerely,



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

