



Oifig an Stiúirthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann 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 Assistant National Director,
National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,
National Technology Park,
Castletroy,
Limerick.

12th July 2024

Deputy Marc MacSharry
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: marc.macsharry@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy MacSharry,

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: 28089/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth his plans to address the deficiency in essential hydro-therapy infrastructure in the north-west (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied: given the absence of purpose built hydro therapy facilities in the Counties of Sligo, Donegal and Mayo essential for those with certain disabilities to exercise, the detrimental impact on people with including those with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy who are wheel chair dependent of the absence of such facilities, the consequent increased instance and acceleration of dystonia for such patients as a result of the lack of weekly exercise in purpose built hydro therapy facilities, what is the government's intention to address this deficiency in essential infrastructure? What specific plans are there to develop the appropriate purpose built hydro therapy facility which is required? Where will it be located ? how much will it cost? And what are the time lines around its commencement and completion.

HSE Response

The aim of Hydrotherapy is to help people affected by adverse health conditions to improve their physical function and wellbeing. Hydrotherapy is a treatment used by physiotherapists to manage a range of physical conditions including arthritis, rheumatological conditions, neurological disease, musculoskeletal conditions, orthopaedic conditions, balance impairments and chronic pain.

A physiotherapist may recommend hydrotherapy treatment according to the individuals' assessed need and availability for this resource.

The management and the safe operation of pools, including hydrotherapy pools, involves the provision of well trained staff and strict adherence to infection control and cleaning procedures, fire safety, health and safety and environmental regulations and procedures, safe water management, including water quality and chemical balance level requirements.



Outside organisations using hydrotherapy pools operated by another agency, must ensure that they have their own insurance cover.

Hydrotherapy pools in Ireland are either operated by the HSE or Service Providers funded by the HSE including the CRC. There are also privately run hydrotherapy pools.

There is a good evidence basis for hydrotherapy and potential benefits for many people, adults and children including people with disabilities, for example, the Mater hospital in Dublin has a hydrotherapy pool and Our Lady's Hospice Harold's Cross have pools in two of their sites. Access in these cases is usually aligned to a care pathway and based on clinical needs and available resources.

Sometimes there may be a difference between what therapeutically is clinically appropriate/available and what parents or adults may want in terms of on-going regular hydrotherapy beyond just a block of treatment.

In some cases, service users can self-manage in a public or private pool following an initial block of hydrotherapy and while this is ideal and aligned to the Slaintecare principles, it is not always possible due to accessibility or support issues

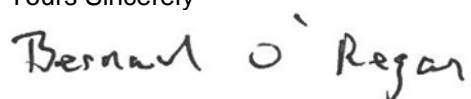
Outside of hydrotherapy pools, all pools should be accessible in line with UNCRPD. Efforts have been made nationally in recent years with grants to make public pools more accessible to persons with disabilities.

Hydrotherapy pools are not available in all parts of the country. It is suggested that it would be preferable and appropriate if people were able to move from a higher cost, controlled therapy environment in a hydrotherapy pool to self-manage with some supports in public and community pools in an integrated way.

With regard to a hydrotherapy facility in the North-West, HSE Capital & Estates confirm that they have not received capital submissions or plans regarding the provision of hydro-therapy infrastructure in the north-west to date.

However, there have been discussions at local level, including HSE North West Estates, regarding considerations as to whether a facility based in the North West is fit for restoration in the context of wider issues concerning the facility.

Yours Sincerely



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

