



Oifig an Stiúrthóir 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,

23rd April 2025

Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: ruairi.omurchu@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Ó Murchú,

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: 18200/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if plans are in place to collect data on the number of people waiting for disability home support and personal assistance services; and if she 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.

Services are accessed through an application process or through referrals from public health nurses or other community based staff. Individuals' needs are evaluated against the criteria for prioritisation for the particular services and then decisions are made in relation to the allocation of resources. 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.



Waiting List

There is no centrally maintained waiting list for these services. The local HSE CHO areas would be aware of the need and requirements in their respective areas and would work with the local Service Providers with a view to responding to the level of presenting needs within the resources available.

With regard to the query if plans are in place to collect data on the number of people waiting for disability home support and personal assistance services, the HSE is not aware of any specific plans or initiatives going forward regarding this, however further information is outlined below regarding the Disability Support Application Management Tool

Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSMAT)

HSE Disability Services has introduced a system called the Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSMAT), which provides a list and detailed profiles of people (Adults & Children) who need additional funded supports in each CHO.

DSMAT captures detailed information on home and family circumstances and a detailed presentation profile of the individuals. This enables Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) areas to record and manage requests for support and to ensure that the application process is equitable and transparent.

It is important to note that in the absence of a statutory, legislative framework providing entitlement to services, the DSMAT is not a chronological waiting list. Rather, 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.

Please see tables below - National Aggregation for 2019 to end of Quarter 2 2024.

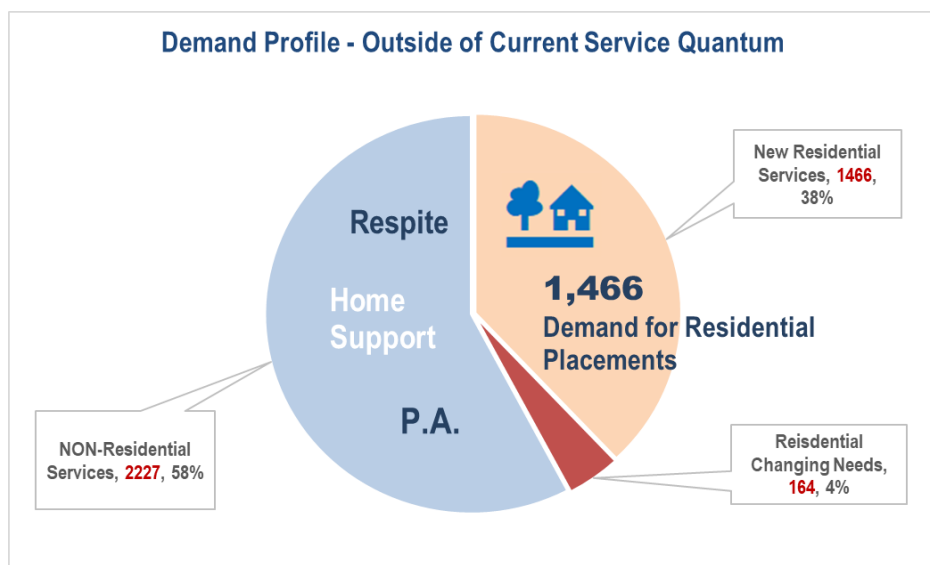
The updated figures below represent a "point in time" analysis and may not include applications received in to the CHO but not yet processed onto the DSMAT tool. (This includes applications for Home support and /or other services such as PA and Day services.)

Table 1: Applications for Non Residential Services

Total Applicants: Personal Assistance and Home Support Services and Day Respite Services	Mid. Yr. 2019	Mid. Yr. 2020	Mid. Yr. 2021	Mid. Yr. 2022	Mid. Yr. 2023	End of Q2 2024
	1117	1619	1903	2142	2492	2,227

The pie chart below, provides an overview of the demand for services – outside of current service quantum. (most recent information available)





58% of applications for Disability Services are for Respite and or/Home Support and /or PA services.

In the normal course of service delivery, at local CHO level, 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 or Home Support 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.

Currently, each CHO has a process to manage applications and referrals for PA and Home Support Services. 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.

Service Provision

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Support Services available to persons with disabilities. Table 2 below provides data for PA & Home Support Services delivered to people with a disability from 2018 - 2024. The HSE has consistently, year on year, increased the number of hours of PA and Home Support Services delivered to people with a disability.

Table 2 data for PA & Home Support Services

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PA Services – Number of Hours	1,639,481	1,652,030	1,781,310	1,700,309	1,746,136	1,686,227	1,848,002
PA Services –No. People availing of service	2,535	2,551	2,673	2,613	2,669	2,728	2,865
Home Support – Number of Hours	3,138,939	3,036,182	2,939,541	2,949,806	3,369,146	3,544,938	3,850,161
Home Support – No. People availing of service	7,522	7,321	6,792	6,902	7,164	7,026	6,935

- PA hours delivered = 1,848,002 in 2024, which is almost in line NSP target of 1,850,000. However, it is up 8.9% on SPLY reflecting the allocation in the NSP 2024 of additional personal assistant hours to support persons with a disability in their own communities
- No. People in receipt of PA = 2,865, which was ahead of NSP target of 2,740.
- Home Support hrs delivered = 3,850,161 in 2024, which was 10.6% ahead of the NSP target and 8.3% ahead of the same period last year.



- No. People in receipt of HS = 6,935, which is down on NSP target of 7,326.

The need for increased services is acknowledged and the HSE continues to work with agencies to explore various ways of responding to this need in line with the budget available. The current level of PA service includes an increase in PA hours totalling 350,370 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 hours of personal assistant supports.
- 2024 = 80,000 additional hours of personal assistant supports.

In 2025, in accordance with the National Service Plan, the HSE is committed to the provision of an additional 95,000 personal assistant and 40,000 home support hours.

Future Planning

With regard to additional PA and Home Support Services, the Department of Health's 2021 Disability Capacity Review advises that up to €15 million per year by 2032 – equivalent to 600,000 additional hours - is needed to meet the requirements for Personal Assistants and Home Support.

The Action Plan for Disability Services 2024 – 2026 advises that and 110,000 extra home support hours a year is required by 2026 to address shortfall in services and to support individuals with disabilities to live a fuller more independent life and participate in normal activities in the community, in line with UNCRPD Article 19.

Each CHO continues to actively manage applications for support from service users with high levels of acuity/safeguarding risks, through active case-management and inter-agency cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director,
Access and integration,
Disability Services

