



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,
Limerick.

21st February 2025

Deputy Roderic O'Gorman
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: roderick.ogorman@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Gorman,

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: 5026/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if Budget 2025 made provision to fund the HSE for the refurbishment, operation and staffing of existing hydrotherapy pools that are currently closed; if so, when the services benefitting from this funding will be identified; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

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.

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.



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

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. There is a suggestion 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.

Service Plan 2025

As per the 2025 Service Plan, focus for Specialist Community-Based Disability Services will be on a number of key areas which include:

- Targeted services to benefit children and adults, including equine therapy, occupational therapy for dyspraxia, specialist phone line supports for Parkinson's Disease, the Cumas Ability Programme, Ability West Best Buddies Programme, expansion of services in the Central Remedial Clinic, hydrotherapy pools and provision of frequency modulation systems through Chime

The Letter of Determination, which sets out the 2025 funding determination for Specialist Community Based Disability Services, includes detail on the bespoke initiatives which includes:

Funding of €0.5m has been allocated to refurbish, operationalise and staff existing hydrotherapy pools that are currently closed.

Yours Sincerely,

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

