



Oifig an Stiúrthoir Cúnta,  
Cúram Priomhúil Rochtain agus Comhthathú,

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27<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Deputy Henegan,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 24814/25 To ask the Minister for Health if she will increase the provision of disability aids and appliances, improve access to therapies and personal assistance services, and address existing backlogs for supports such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, and home modifications; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -**

**- Barry Heneghan**

Dear Deputy Henegan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 24814/25) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I will answer your query in three parts dealing with each issue that you have raised separately.

### **1. Provision of disability aids and appliances**

The HSE provides aids and appliances through the Community Funded Aids Scheme. The overall spend in relation to the schemes increased 6.2% in 2024 and is projected to increase a further 0.8% this year. This increase in spend reflects the increasing investment in this area to meet current demand.

### **2. Access to therapies**

The HSE recognises the need to address waiting lists, and this is reflected in our commitment to developing the provision of Community Services. Community based care is currently undergoing substantial reform in line with Sláintecare. This involves significant re-structuring in how services are delivered to ensure that care is provided in an equitable, efficient and integrated way through newly established Community Healthcare Networks and Healthcare Regions. This changes the way that our services are delivered.

The establishment of Healthcare regions mean services can:

- plan and deliver around the specific needs of people in each area
- improve how services are run and how people take responsibility for them
- strengthen local decision-making by giving regions the power to plan, manage and deliver care
- provide a consistent quality of care across the country, with the HSE Centre being responsible for ensuring standards across the regions



Each of the newly formed HSE Health Regions has its own budget, leadership team and responsibility for local decision-making and continue to work towards the Sláintecare objectives. The HSE Health Regions and each national service has been provided with a specified number of Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) and can replace, recruit and prioritise staff within that approved number. This gives Health Regions control to focus resources where there is the greatest need.

### **3. Backlogs for supports such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, and home modifications**

Our supplier data shows that the HSE provides over 10,000 wheelchairs per year with an associated cost of over €15m annually. Data provided to us from our suppliers show a year on year increase in both spend and numbers of items provided over the last three years. In Q1 2025 7,120 items have been provided this is compared to 10,470 provided in totality in 2024.

It should be noted that the time from request for a wheelchair to delivery to the service user can vary greatly. For non-powered wheelchairs which are kept as stock items this time period is minimal. For powered wheelchairs and in particular more bespoke chairs, the time period can be considerably longer. Factors that would influence this would include manufacturing times and supply chain challenges.

In relation to Community Audiology hearing aids provision, there are currently no backlogs. The number of hearing aids provided in 2022, 2023 and 2024 is outlined in the table below.

Year	No. of Hearing Aids Issued by Community Audiology
2022	23,721
2023	22,714
2024	23, 023

The HSE does not provide financial supports for home modifications this grant is dealt with through the local authorities.

I trust this is of assistance.

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**Seán McArt**  
General Manager  
Primary Care Access & Integration