



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.

16th September 2025

Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: jennifer.murnaneconnor@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 45775/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the number of persons with a disability both nationally and in county Carlow registered and the number accessing services both nationally and in county Carlow to date in 2025.

Dear Deputy Murnane O'Connor,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

The HSE provides and funds a wide range of disability services to those with physical, sensory, intellectual disability and autism. Disability services focus on supporting and enabling people with disabilities to maximise their full potential, as independently as possible. Current policies are based on the principles of person-centredness to ensure insofar as possible that the supports for a person are based on individual assessed need, will and preference and to support people to remain as close to home and connected to their community as possible.

The needs of people with a disability, including intellectual disability, extend well beyond health service provision, and the health service participates fully with other Government departments and services in the development of cross-sectoral strategies to maximise access to services and supports for people with disabilities.

In this context, there is a collective effort being made nationally and regionally to the delivery of services and to uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability.

Wherever possible, people with disabilities are supported to live in the community and to access mainstream health and social care services. Specialist disability services focus on providing supports to people with more complex disabilities, and to complement the mainstream health and social care services provided to people with disabilities alongside the rest of the population. The development of specialist services is underpinned by some key principles including:

- Rights-based services aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Services provided in the community where people live
- Early intervention to maximise people's capacities
- Person-centred services supporting people's choice and control
- A strengths-based approach, recognising and supporting the inherent abilities of people with disabilities
- Coherent and integrated services and supports
- Services that are equitable and consistent
- Prioritisation on the basis of assessed need
- Services provided by interdisciplinary teams, networked regionally with other teams, and supported by enhanced services and supports where necessary.

The principle of 'mainstream first' requires that HSE-led services are developed in the context of supporting actions by Government departments in the areas of housing, transport, education, including higher education, employment and social protection.



Demography

The National Disability Authority published a fact sheet in November 2024 which drew information from Census 2022.

In this census, 1,109,557 people reported experiencing a long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent. This means that 21.5% of the population, or more than 1 in 5 people in Ireland, have a disability. Specifically, 13.6% of the population in 2022 reported having a long-lasting condition or difficulty 'to some extent', and a further 7.9% reported having at least one condition or difficulty 'to a great extent'.

The difficulties reported included those experienced due to old age. The proportion of people experiencing a long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent generally increased with age.

Disability is slightly more prevalent among females (22.2%) than males (20.9%) in Ireland.

The percentage of people reporting a disability in Co. Carlow was 23.1%

Please see:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpsr/censusofpopulation2022-summaryresults/healthdisabilitycaringandvolunteering/>

and

<https://nda.ie/publications/nda-factsheet-1-disability-statistics>

The National Ability Support System (NASS)

In 2019 the National Ability Support System (NASS) replaced the National Intellectual Disability Database (NIDD, established 1995) and the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD, established 2002). NASS is one of four national health information systems managed by the HRB's National Health Information Systems Unit and hosted on the Unit's web-based platform, LINK.

The purpose of NASS is to gather information to aid the planning, development, and organisation of HSE funded disability services. A person is eligible to be registered on NASS if they receive or require (either currently or within the next five years) a HSE funded disability service as identified by their service provider.

Trained users within HSE and non-HSE organisations who provide HSE disability-funded services record information about their service users and the services they receive or require in the web-based system. Each user record is reviewed annually.

To ensure that information is accurate and up to date Providers of Disability Services consult and engage with the parents and families of people with a disability and their representative bodies.

There were 34,652 adults on NASS accessing or requiring a disability service in 2024. There was a 9% increase in the number of adults reviewed on NASS in 2024, compared to 2023 (34,652 in 2024 and 31,698 in 2023).

Using information provided by NASS, the Health research Board has identified the new services required for 2024–2029 (identified for adults only)

- One-tenth (10%; 3,422) of adults require at least one support service from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service.
- The support services most commonly required are occupational therapy (742), physiotherapy (735), and speech and language therapy (609), and clinical psychology (558).



Please see Table 1 below which gives information on the numbers of services users registered on NASS by CHO area in 2024. CHO 5 (Highlighted below) includes information for the Carlow Area.

Number of service users registered on NASS by Community Healthcare	
Organisation (CHO) of service, 2024	NASS 2024 registrations
CHO 1 - Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan	4,270
CHO 2 - Galway, Roscommon, Mayo	3,932
CHO 3 -Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary	3,175
CHO 4 - Kerry, Cork	6,622
CHO 5 - South Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford	4,304
CHO 6 -Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin South East	2,088
CHO 7 - Kildare, West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, Dublin South West	4,879
CHO 8 -Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Louth, Meath	5,081
CHO 9 - Dublin North, Dublin North Central, Dublin North West	5,859
Total	40,210

Please note that Children included are those who received residential, respite, home support and/or specialised support services from dedicated organisations. Information on the multidisciplinary supports received from Children's Disability Network Teams was not included.

I also attach CHO 5 National Ability Supports System (NASS) HRB 2024 Infographic Information.

For further information please see:

<https://www.hiqa.ie/areas-we-work/health-information/data-collections/national-ability-supports-system-nass>

And

The Health Research Boards 2024 report - Overview of people engaging with disability services, 2024 at:

<https://www.hrb.ie/hrb/overview-of-people-engaging-with-disability-services-2024>

Yours Sincerely,

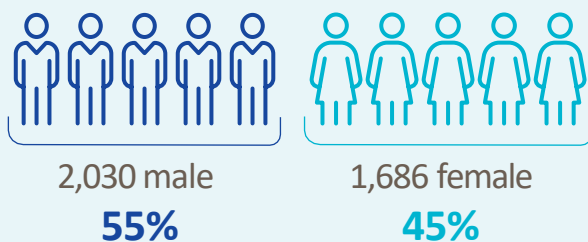
Tom McGuirk,
General Manager, Disability Services, Access & Integration



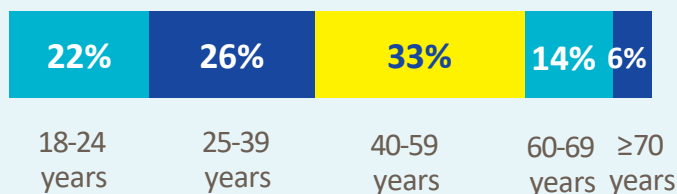
3,716

Adult records reviewed on NASS

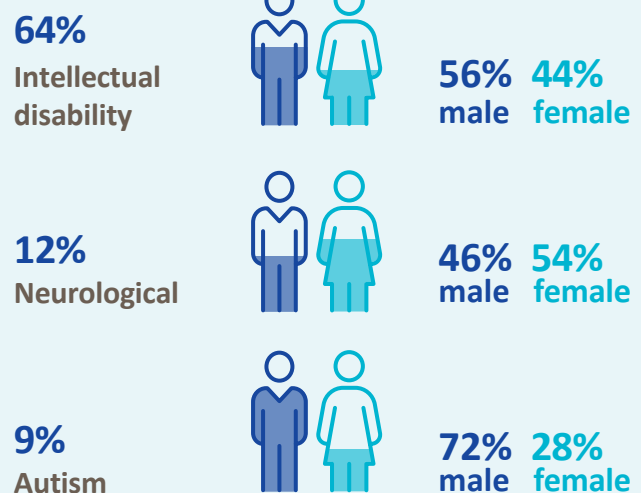
Demographics



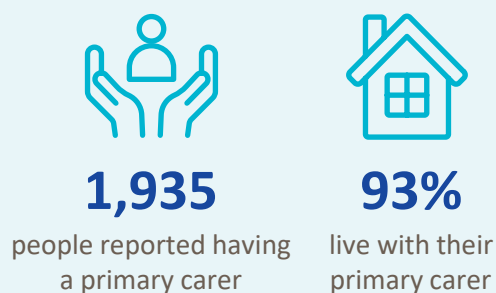
Age groups



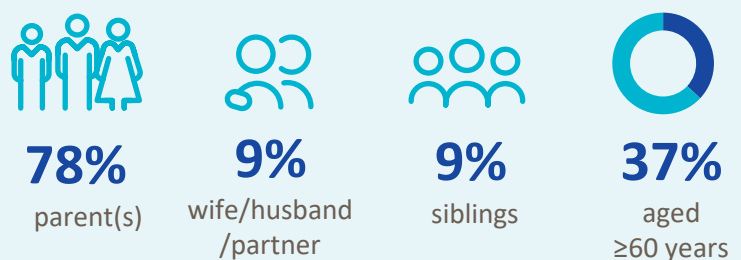
Most common primary disability



Primary carer



Of the primary carers:



Current services received

Adults and children*



909

lived in a
residential setting



823

received home
support



138

accessed a
personal assistant



124

accessed
day respite



637

availed of
overnight respite
8,706 nights

Adults only



2,733

adults accessed
day services



1,463

adults received
support services

New services required

Adults and children*



250

residential
places required



110

home support
places required



16

personal assistant
services required



167

people require
overnight respite



337

people require a
day service in 2025*

* Information provided by the HSE National Day Service Database.

Adults only



279

adults require
support services

Main support services required:



Occupational
Therapy



Chiropody



Speech and
Language Therapy



Physiotherapy

* Children included are those who received residential, respite, home support and/or specialised support services from dedicated organisations. Information on the multidisciplinary supports received from Children's Disability Network Teams was not included.

Research. Evidence. Action.