



**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.

10<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Deputy Rose Conway Walsh  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [rose.conwaywalsh@oireachtas.ie](mailto:rose.conwaywalsh@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Conway Walsh,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 28414/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated capital cost of providing 100, 250 and 400 additional intensive support packages for children with disabilities who have high/complex support needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 28418/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated first- and full-year current costs of providing 100, 250 and 400 additional intensive support packages for children with disabilities who have high/complex support needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 28419/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the effect demographic pressures are likely to have on demand for intensive support packages for children with disabilities who have high/complex support needs over the next five and ten years, respectively, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

93 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and are providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team works closely together focusing on the child's and family's own priorities.



The model of service for all CDNTs is family-centred and based on the needs of the child. This includes universal, targeted and specialised supports and interventions, as appropriate to the individual child and family. It is based on the objectives of empowering and supporting parents and others who are with the child on a daily basis to facilitate the child's developmental needs.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for over 46,000 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow.

### **Intensive Support Packages**

This was a new development initiative put in place in 2020 and then further developed in 2021. The rationale behind the initiative was to demonstrate a person-centred approach to targeted supports designed to maintain the person in their own home and community, reducing a risk of future residential needs.

These intensive transitional support packages, as referred to in NSP 2020, were mainly aimed at children and young people with complex/high support needs experiencing substantial levels of need, but who do not, as yet, require a high cost long term residential placement. The intention being to prevent family breakdown and demand for emergency residential placements by providing access to pre-crisis interventions such as:

- Intensive in-home visiting supports;
- Planned residential respite interventions;
- Specialist behavioural support interventions;
- Access to planned extended day / weekend and summer day based activities.

In 2020, Disability Services committed to provide 144 intensive transitional support packages. However, at end of December 2020, a total of 857 intensive home support packages were developed across the 9 CHOs.

In 2021, €6m in funding was allocated to Intensive Support packages. Disability Services committed to developing 358 additional intensive support packages and by year end had put in place 497 intensive support packages. This included 437 new packages and 60 packages approved in 2020 against additional Q4 funding, which were maintained in 2021.

The significant increase on the NSP targets was thought to be indicative of the requirement for additional in-home services to compensate for the reduction in the delivery of traditional respite services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the HSE acknowledges that the delivery of these Intensive Support Packages exceeded the targets agreed as part of the service planning process in both 2020 and 2021. It is also acknowledged that a number of packages recorded in the 857 referenced above may have been focused purely on hours of support and did not contain the more holistic elements around behaviour support and family-centred planning. Again, the impact of the pandemic and the need to enhance core levels of service during closures of and service reductions in day services and respite played a significant role here.

In accordance with the NSP 2022, the HSE was allocated funding to provide 422 in home respite supports for emergency cases; this included 402 packages put in place in 2021, which have been maintained in 2022, plus 10 new supported living packages and 10 new intensive support packages to support transitions and discharges from acute services and the National Rehabilitation Hospital. At end of December 2022, 18 new intensive support packages and 19 new supported living packages were developed. As per the 2022 National Service Plan, funding for this was provided under all new measures – Disability Services.

In accordance with NSP 2023, Disability Services committed to the provision of 447 in home respite supports for emergency cases; this includes 420 packages put in place in 2022 which have been maintained in 2023, plus 27 additional in-home respite packages to children and young adults outlined in NSP 2023.

In 2023, we also developed a further 45 in home respite supports for Priority 1 cases, which added to the packages put in place in 2022 and were maintained in 2023, brings the number of in home respite supports for Priority 1 emergency cases delivered during the year to 465.



In accordance with NSP 2024, Specialist Disability Services is committed to providing 469 intensive support packages for priority 1 cases. This includes packages put in place in 2023 which have been maintained in 2024.

Please also note that these intensive support packages would be provided in addition to the traditional services that we deliver, such as Day Services; Respite Services; Personal Assistance and Home Support Services.

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.

## **Costs**

As mentioned above, intensive support packages are provided to maintain the person in their own home and community, reducing a risk of future residential needs. In that context, capital costings are not applicable.

The first and full year cost, including staff and operating cost, of providing 100, 250 and 400 additional intensive support packages for children with disabilities who have high/complex support needs is as follows:

Based on 8 hrs per day 7-days per week – 56 hrs per week and inclusive of premia at €31 per hour:  
€10,380,743, €25,951,857 and €41,522,972 respectively

These are approximate figures and based on a rate of €31 per hour.

## **Future Planning**

With regard to demographic pressures and future demand for intensive support packages, the Action Plan for Disability Services 2024 – 2026 advises that around 550 additional intensive support packages (for children and adults) is required to be put in place over 2024-2026, to limit need for high-cost residential care places.

There is significant unmet need currently and the projected changes in the size and age profile of the disability population will add to unmet need over the coming decade.

The Disability Capacity Review Report shows that, overall, the disability population is expected to grow up to 2032, with a change in the overall age structure that will affect demand for disability services. The central projection forecasts that the number of adults with a disability would grow by around 10% to 2027 and by 17% in 2032 over the 2018 level.

The fastest growth will be for young adults (up a third by 2032) and over 55s (up a quarter by 2032). The importance of early intervention and effective services for children and young people is important in this context to meet their needs now and to mitigate the requirement down the line of increasingly complex need coming through in young adults including earlier residential service, which is also seen in current DSMAT figures.

As the future course of birth rates is unknown, projecting the future size of child population is an uncertain exercise. The Disability Capacity Review considered the Central Statistics Office's analysis of population projection called M2F2 and indicated that:

- There will be a steady decline to 2032 in the number of under-6s and projects a 15% drop to 2032 relative to 2018
- A small increase of about 3% for those aged 6 -17 years in the mid-2020s, declining to around 91% of the 2018 level by 2032
- The school leavers age group of 18-19 year olds is projected to rise steadily by about 20% of 2018 levels to the late 2020s and then to decline to about 15% above the 2018 level. This reflects the baby boom of the first decade of the millennium.

There is some evidence of a higher share of children and young people presenting with more complex needs which is evident in the changing profile of children accessing CDNTs and school leavers, with more complex medical and behavioural support needs

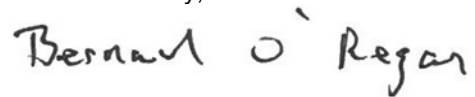


This change in demographics, increased life expectancy and changing needs for those with both a physical and sensory disability, and an intellectual disability has led to a significant increase in the need for disability services across all settings

The 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.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**National Disability Team**

