



Oifig an Stiúirthóir 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.

23rd July 2024

Deputy Duncan Smith,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: duncan.smith@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Smith,

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: 32876/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of personal assistant hours funded in 2023 and 2024; how many people are currently supported; how many have applied but not yet been granted support; and if he 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 PA and Home Support 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.

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-

The 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.

Residential Services

Total Applicants New Residential Service	2019	2020	2021	2022	Mid. Yr. 2023	End of Q1 2024
	776	1033	1158	1205	1296	1,414

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 Q1 2024
	1117	1619	1903	2142	2492	2,181

PA hours provided

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Support Services available to persons with disabilities. Table 1 below provides data for PA & Home Support Services delivered to people with a disability from 2014 - 2023. 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: Figures for PA and Home Support Services Delivered to People with a Disability 2014-2023

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023



PA Services – Number of Hours	1,335,759	1,482,492	1,510,116	1,516,727	1,639,481	1,652,030	1,781,310	1,700,309	1,746,136	1,686,227
PA Services – No. People availing of service	2,224	2,369	2,427	2,470	2,535	2,551	2,673	2,613	2,669	2,728
Home Support – Number of Hours	2,614,967	2,777,569	2,928,914	2,930,000	3,138,939	3,036,182	2,939,541	2,949,806	3,369,146	3,544,938
Home Support – No. People availing of service	7,312	7,219	7,323	7,492	7,522	7,321	6,792	6,902	7,164	7,026

Activity Data Quarter 1 2024: PA Services

See Tables below.

Table 4- PA Services for Persons with a Disability, end of Q1 2024

	Number of Adults with a Physical and Sensory Disability in Receipt of PA Services	Number of Hours PA Services Delivered
	Q1 2024	Q1 2024
National Total	2,867	459,413
CHO Area 1	157	20,991
CHO Area 2	575	104,153
CHO Area 3	440	89,408
CHO Area 4	580	44,882
CHO Area 5	351	38,437
CHO Area 6	114	19,423
CHO Area 7	98	18,840
CHO Area 8	340	48,805
CHO Area 9	212	74,475

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 over 15% increase in PA hours totalling 270,370 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 personal assistant hours.

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.



Funding

Funding for PA and Home Supports services has increased year and year. Please see the table below.

Service area	2018 Funding €000	2019 Funding €000	2020 Funding €000	2021 Funding €000	2022 Funding €000	2023 Funding €000
PA & Home Support	80,957	84,909	94,885	100,613	109,809	115,191
Total Funding	1,772,300	1,903,625	2,054,500	2,210,900	2,347,380	2,518,552

Please note that PA and Home Support funding is not reported on separately.

Service Plan 2024

As per the National Service Plan 2024, the HSE will ensure the delivery of additional personal assistant hours to support persons with a disability in their own communities, within available funding .€2m has been provided nationally to fund an additional 80,000 PA hours which have been allocated to the CHO areas based on population. This represents a further investment year on year in this service in recent budgets. In addition, the National Office is establishing a Working Group, involving key stakeholders, to develop an agreed definition of personal assistant services and a nationally agreed process for the allocation of PA supports across all CHOs.

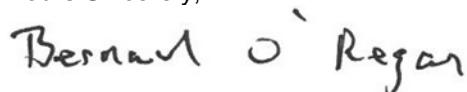
Future Planning

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 800,000 extra PA hours and 110,000 extra 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
National Disability Team

