



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.

28th May 2024

Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: michael.fitzmaurice@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Fitzmaurice,

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: 22154/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the progress that has been made in developing a procurement framework for disability home support; if he is still on target to develop and agree this by Q2 2024, as per the HSE National Service Plan 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

In August 2023, the HSE's Older Persons Services implemented an Authorisation Scheme for the provision of Home Support. This Authorisation Scheme for Home Support Services for Older Persons does not include Disability Services (DS) within its scope. A new arrangement is required to provide a compliant service for Disability Services. The development of a Disability Home Support Procurement Framework was referenced in the HSE's National Service Plan 2024.

Home Support provides personal and/or essential domestic care and support for individuals with disabilities within their home and are primarily provided by service providers under service arrangement with HSE Disability Services.

Disability Services need to safeguard Disability Home Support services and service arrangements, to ensure they meet the current active demand noted in DSMAT and through this, ease demand on the overall system - a pressurised residential service, and to enable individuals with disabilities to live at home, in line with UNCRPD Article 19.

Additionally, the government will be proposing new Home Support regulations across all service for adults over 18 and the government's Disability Action Plan 2024 -2026 states a key priority is achieving "*Greater access to Home Supports to promote independence and participation.*" Ensuring a Disability procurement framework is in place will be an essential component to support both initiatives.



Moving forward, the HSE does not anticipate a reduction in home support services demand and costs due to a number of factors:

- An ageing disability population with increasing complex needs
- An increase in the number of service hours required for clients. Note- 2023 delivery output was 3,443,656, 13.6% (323,656 hours) over target, which is indicative of the significant demand for this service.
- 607 persons identified on DSMAT requiring Home Support, with an average of 425 hours per year.
- The government's Disability Action Plan for Disability Services 2024 -2026 has set a target of 110,000 extra Home Support hours over 3 years.
- The need to ease pressure in the system and prevent and reduce admissions into Emergency Residential and Nursing Home placements and to reduce the level of need for Respite services.
- A rising level of inflation (therefore an increasing cost base).
- An increase in the cost base (cost of living).

Disability Home Support Procurement Framework Objectives

The Disability Home Support Procurement framework will aim to:

- To provide nationwide home support services to Disability clients with such requirements, where direct service provision is not available;
- To ensure that the highest quality service providers are contracted to provide the best quality service to clients until such time as a statutory scheme is available;
- To ensure a compliant arrangement (Authorisation Scheme) is in place with competitive rates to optimise opportunities around economies of scale ensuring best value for money for the HSE;
- To assist in the reduction of delayed discharges at times of critical capacity in Acute units;
- To assist in hospital egress and the reduction of delayed transfers of care;
- To meet growing demand for home support services and Sláintecare/HSE objectives of increasing access to care and supports at home and in the community thus reducing the requirement for long-term residential care, nursing home care and acute services.
- To support New Home Support regulation and the Government's Disability Action Plan 2024 to 2026.

Planned Approach

Currently Disability Services have local agreements in place for service provision with Home Support agencies (including consortia), across each of the 9 CHO that span the 6 new Health Areas.

Moving forward, the planned approach to the market will be via the Authorisation Scheme model similar to that of the Older Persons Service, whereby all suitably qualified applicants that submit required documentation will be invited on to the Scheme.

The Authorisation Scheme will encompass both Selection and Pass/Fail Criteria. The Selection Criteria will be based upon a number of factors including financial, professional, experience. Pass/Fail Criteria will encompass the manner in which the services that can be offered by the Providers. As the process will be operated via an Authorisation Scheme, unsuccessful Applicants will be in a position to re-apply to the Scheme on a periodic basis.

The authorisation model will be open-ended, therefore new entrants to the market may apply to join at any stage, periodically. For the avoidance of doubt, contracts awarded to Scheme members will be for a defined period.

It is planned that Service Providers that are already qualified on the OPS Scheme will be accommodated, with a mechanism that takes this into account alongside specific Disability requirements.

Progress to Date

The development of the framework has significantly progressed, with the drafting of required documentation and the establishment of the following project governance structures which are proceeding with their required actions:



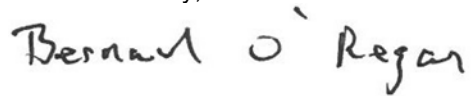
- **Oversight and Steering Group** – consisting of the Assistant National Director for Disabilities, Finance, HSE Sourcing and Contracts and Disability Heads of Service.
- **Project Support Team** – consisting of HSE Procurement Lead and National Disability Services Team members.
- **Commercial Evaluation Team** – consisting of Procurement Category Specialist and Disability Finance.
- **Procurement Evaluation Group (PEG)** – consisting of representatives from HSE Procurement, National Disability Services, Disability General/Case Managers from each of the 6 Health regions, Disability Finance, Quality and Clinical Leads

Currently the Service Specification of Requirements and Service Response documentation have been drafted and reviewed by the Procurement Evaluation Group. Following any required amendments, this documentation will then require to be approved by the Procurement Evaluation Group and the Steering Group.

Additionally, Home Support Standard Operating Procedures have been outlined, however they require further input from the PEG and agreement from the Steering Group.

A consultation session(s) is being planned with Disability Umbrella organisations. Once the consultation is complete and the documentation signed off, HSE procurement will be in a position to initiate the tender process, with a proposed date to be agreed.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

