



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Àras 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 October 2024

Deputy Jim O'Callaghan,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: jim.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

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: 39869/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of creating an additional 10,000, 15,000 and 20,000 personal assistance hours per year. .

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.

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 - 2022. The HSE has consistently, year on year, increased the number of hours of PA and Home Support Services delivered to people with a disability.



PA and Home Support hours provided

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) available to persons with disabilities. Table 1 below provides data for PA Services delivered to people with a disability from 2020 – to end of Quarter 2 2024.

Table 1: Figures for PA Services Delivered to People with a Disability 2020-end of Quarter 2 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	End of Q2 2024
PA Services – Number of Hours	1,781,310	1,700,309	1,746,136	1,686,227	925,522
PA Services –No. People availing of service	2,673	2,613	2,669	2,728	2,865

The delivery of PA and Home Support Services has remained steady during the first half of 2024; PA Services delivered 925,522 hours to end Q2, which is ahead of the NSP target by -0.1%, and 8.2% ahead of the same period last year. This is reflective of the allocation in the NSP 2024 of additional personal assistant hours to support persons with a disability in their own communities.

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.

Costs

With regard to the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of creating an additional 10,000, 15,000 and 20,000 personal assistance hours per year, calculating at a rate of €31 per hour, this would be €310,000, €465,000 and €620,000.

Please note that these are approximate figures and as stated, are based on a rate of €31 per hour.

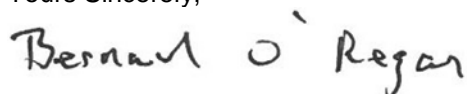
In addition, it is important to note that €2,000,000 has been provided to the CHO areas in 2024 and 2025 (full year cost in 2025) for the provision of 80,000 additional PA hours based on €25 per hour.

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

