



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.

29th October 2024

Deputy Roisin Shortall,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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: 43108/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if he has any plans to provide dedicated services for functional neurological disorder (FND) patients; if his attention has been brought to a recent report which found that Ireland is the only country in western Europe without a specialised FND service (details supplied); if he intends to allocate funding to begin addressing this; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied: Functional Neurological Disorder in Europe: regional differences in education and health policy' (2024)

HSE Response

Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) is a condition which arises primarily from a disorder of nervous system functioning, rather than identifiable pathophysiological disease. Alterations in the functioning of key brain networks, rather than abnormalities in brain structure, underpin FND symptoms. The frequency and severity of FND symptoms can fluctuate and it is now believed that there is no one single causative mechanism for FND.

FND symptoms may follow a chronic course and can cause high levels of disability and distress.

Disability services, are provided based on the presenting needs of an individual rather than by the diagnosis of the individual or the actual type of disability or service required. Services are provided following individual assessment according to the person's individual requirements and care needs.

The HSE funds a range of community services and supports to enable each individual with a disability, to achieve their full potential and maximise independence, including living as independently as possible. These are provided through acute and primary care services, along with specialist disability services as required by the person



The range of community services and supports provided to people with a disability include for example assisted living services (PA and Home Support), Therapy Services, Aids and Appliances and Respite Services.

Additional funding for these services to meet the needs of people with disabilities including people with Functional Neurological Disorder is provided for through the annual estimates process.

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.

The Clinical Lead for the National Clinical Program in Rehabilitation Medicine advises that currently, there is no separate 'pathway' for people with 'Functional Neurological Disorders/ 'Functional Neurological Symptoms Disorders'.

These conditions occur across the population. GPs, Neurologists, Rehabilitation Medicine physicians, Paediatricians, Gerontologists, Psychiatrists etc (and to a lesser extent all specialists) will see people with such conditions.

In-patient rehabilitation services will take people with more severe 'Functional Neurological Disorders/ 'Functional Neurological Symptoms Disorders'.

There are a small number of people with very complex 'Functional Neurological Disorders/ 'Functional Neurological Symptoms Disorders'. Ideally the rehabilitation in these situations should have clinicians with special training/expertise in this area.

Specific expertise would include rehabilitation expertise in the nursing/medical/therapy staff for example in relational dynamics, eating disorders and personality and schema expertise. Input from Psychiatry with special expertise in this area is needed.

The HSE acknowledges the role and contribution of non-statutory agencies such as Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) Ireland in the development and provision of supports and services to people with disabilities.

Estimates Process and Multi Annual Investment

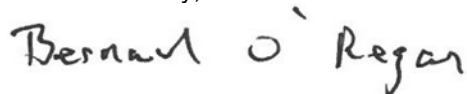
As outlined above, each year the HSE participates in the Estimates Process with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and makes a submission for additional monies to meet the health and social care needs of the population it services.

The Disability Service makes submissions for additional funding for all services including Day, Residential, Respite, Home Support/PA hours, Multi-Disciplinary Posts and Neuro Rehab monies as a key element of its submission. Any new funding secured is allocated to the CHOs to provide services to those with the greatest need (priority basis).

The HSE makes every effort to secure multi-annual investment for services via the Estimates process and is very conscious of the need to deliver disability policy on a more sustainable footing given the significant levels of need for increased and more effective services and supports to enable people with a disability to live independent lives in their own community.

While Budget 2025, published on Tuesday the 1st October 2025, announced a funding allocation of €25.76 billion to the Department of Health, the granular detail regarding the allocation of funding for various services will not be known until the Service Plan for 2025 is published.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team



