



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.

30th September 2024

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 37039/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for an update on the work of the personal assistance review group to develop a protocol for the eligibility and allocation of personal assistant services based on a universally agreed definition

HSE Response

The HSE acknowledges the role of PA Services in supporting the person with a disability to realise the entitlements set out in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). As Ireland has now ratified the UN Convention it will be necessary to have a policy on the provision of PA services with an agreed definition, criteria for accessing the service, assessment process and an indication of the level of support that can be provided.

In this context, in 2023, the HSE has also established a Personal Assistance (PA) Review Group to develop a model of service, scope and access criteria.

The HSE has contributed to the development by Government of the Capacity Review of the Disability Sector (2020) and the Disability Action Plan 2024 – 2026. These set out the future service needs and how they might be addressed. They incorporate the dual development goals to (a) increase the range of hours available to individuals already in receipt of some PA support and (b) increasing the hours available to make the service available to more people.

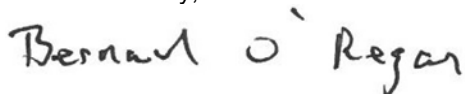
This report will be used by the PA Working Group to improve this important service, as well as making a valuable contribution to the service planning process.



As set out in the Service Plan, the Personal Assistance (PA) Review Group are tasked with the development of a protocol for the eligibility and allocation of personal assistant services based on a universally agreed definition, in collaboration with DCEDIY, people with disabilities and providers. The role of the Working Group on PA is:

- To develop a universally agreed definition of Personal Assistance
- To review the recommendations of the Department of Health's Strategic Workforce Advisory Group, with a view to adopting any relevant recommendations to ensure consistency with national policy for disability/home support services
- To examine the legal and regulatory framework governing personal assistance services in Ireland, identifying any gaps or areas for improvement, and providing recommendations for legislative or policy changes.
- To collate current Personal Assistance Service Provision in each Community Healthcare Area
- To collate the current criteria for access to Personal Assistance service in each of the Community Healthcare Areas
- To conduct a comprehensive review of the current personal assistance services in each Community Healthcare Area, including an assessment of their effectiveness, accessibility, and adequacy in meeting the needs of disabled people.
- To identify and evaluate best practices in personal assistance services from national and international contexts, with a focus on approaches that promote independence, choice, and dignity disabled people.
- To assess the funding mechanisms for personal assistance services, including the allocation and distribution of resources, and make recommendations for ensuring equitable and sustainable funding to meet the needs of disabled people.
- To consult and engage with relevant stakeholders, including disabled people, disability advocacy groups, DPO's, service providers, and other relevant organisations, to gather diverse perspectives and input on personal assistance services.
- Working Group may establish subcommittees or task forces, as deemed necessary, to focus on specific areas of inquiry or expertise, with defined objectives and timelines
- To consider the more socially inclusive requirements of the person, to include personal assistance services across general living, education, employment, old age and the transitions / blockages that may occur.
- To develop a comprehensive report summarising the findings, recommendations, and proposed actions of the Working Group, outlining a roadmap for the improvement and enhancement of personal assistance services on an equitable national basis.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

