



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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30th June 2017

Deputy Billy Kelleher,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: billy.kelleher@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Kelleher,

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 29366/17

To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost full year cost of providing an additional one and a half million personal assistant hours for persons with disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE provides a range of assisted living services including Personal Assistant services to support individuals to maximise their capacity to live full and independent lives. While the resources for the provision of assisted living services available are substantial they are finite.

The role of a Personal Assistant (PA) is to assist a person with a disability to maximise their independence through supporting them to live in integrated settings and to access community facilities. The PA works on a one to one basis, in the home and /or in the community, with a person with a physical or sensory disability. A vital element of this personalised support is the full involvement of the individual (service user) in planning and agreeing the type and the times when support is provided to them, supporting independent living must enhance the person's control over their own life.

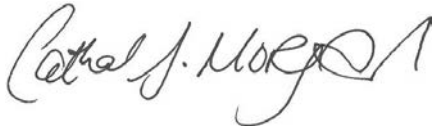
Services are accessed through an application process or through referrals from public health nurses or other community based staff. Individuals' needs are evaluated against the criteria for prioritisation for the particular service and then decisions are made in relation to the allocation of resources. Resource allocation is determined by the needs of the individual, compliance with prioritisation criteria, and the level of resources available.

Services, in the main, 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.

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) services available to persons with disabilities. In the 2017 National Service Plan, the HSE's priority is to provide 1.4 million hours of personal assistance to more than 2,000 people with a disability, representing an increase of 100,000 hours over the 2016 target of 1.3 million hours.

The HSE can confirm that in excess of €32 million is spent on the provision of PA services annually. However, the need for increased PA Services is acknowledged and the HSE continues to work with agencies and the Department of Health to explore various ways of responding to this need. HSE estimates that approximately €31.8 - €37.5 million would be required to support an additional 1.5 million personal assistant hours a year.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations,
Disability Services, Social Care Division**