

Summary of Disability Action Plan Framework 2022-2025

In addition to the main health services that are open to anyone, including people with disabilities, the HSE's budget also includes other specialised supports and services those who have additional needs. These services include

- Early intervention
- Specialist therapy teams
- Day services and support to participate in the community
- Personal assistance
- Respite and short breaks
- Supported housing and residential care

Changes to improve disability services, so they support people to live the way they want to, are happening, guided by the **UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities** which sets out people's rights, and by the **Transforming Lives** programme. Over the last year some services were closed or scaled back due to Covid-19, and these are now being restored.

The Government has published a Report, the **Review of Disability Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032** which looks at the amounts of these services that will be needed over the next ten years. The Programme for Government has promised to work towards implementing those findings. In 2021 an extra €179m was spent on disability services, which allowed some progress to be made. It will take a number of years to ensure that there are enough services to meet people's needs. To start with, a plan is now going to be being made to cover the next four years, from 2022-2025.

That plan will look at how many extra staff are needed, with what skills; at how many extra houses or apartments with staff support are needed; and at where in the country any new services are most needed, to make things fairer. It will study the best way to provide respite, to make the most impact. The plan will look at options that can deliver better results, like better early intervention services, or supporting school leavers with disabilities to go to college or take a job rather than go into day services. It will look at how giving extra support to people and families who are going through a crisis can help. It will look at what budgets for disability services are needed between 2022 and 2025.

People with disabilities will be consulted in preparing this plan.

Important areas the plan will consider are

Children's services:

- Keeping up a focus on early intervention and support
- Different therapy staff working together as a team to serve disabled children in their community
- Specialist disability teams and other teams working closely together
- How many people should colleges train in different skills so there will be enough staff for the future

Intensive support for young people with disabilities in severe distress:

Around 360 people and their families got intensive support packages last year to help them cope with severe crises. The plan will look at how well this is working, and is more of this intensive support needed.

Day services for school-leavers:

Because the number of school leavers with disabilities is likely to grow for the next few years, the plan will look at how many extra day service places are likely to be needed, and where. The Plan will look at what the right mix of supports should be, how people prefer to get supports, learning from what worked well for people during Covid, and supporting people who want a job.

Personal Assistance and Home Support

The plan will look at what improvements can be made over the next four years, in line with the principle of independent living

Respite services

The plan will try and maximise the number of families and the impact achieved from respite services. It will study what is the best mix of overnight respite and other respite options to achieve results. People with disabilities and their families will be consulted for this study.

More supported housing in the community

More people will require homes in the community, that provide disability support. The number of older people with disabilities who need this kind of support is growing. As well, there are people who live in big disability centres, or in nursing homes, who would need to be supported in an ordinary house or an apartment in the community. It will take time to build or buy the right houses in the right places. The plan will examine where the extra houses should be, and work with the Department of Housing and the HSE so that provision of housing and of support staff for the residents is matched up.

Timetable for the plan

A group of people in different Government Departments and the HSE will work on the plan and will give proposals to the Government by the end of 2021. The Government will then decide the plan. The plan will guide on any changes or additions to disability services for the next four years, and on the money to be spent on these services.