



Catherine Smith  
Committee Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts,  
Leinster House,  
Dublin 2, D02 XR20,

**R2289 (ii) PAC33**

18 December 2023

**Ref: S1517 PAC33**

Dear Ms Smyth,

I refer to your correspondence of 1 December 2023 on behalf of the Committee, requesting information on whether *the Department has done any work on what a multi-annual programme would look like and cost in respect of residential and respite care.*

As you know, responsibility for specialist community based disability services transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in March of this year.

Total funding of €2.9bn has been provided for disability services in this Department's Vote in 2024. This includes additional funding of €20.5m for residential services for children and adults, as well as additional funding of €15m for expansion of respite services.

As Committee members will be aware, in 2021, Government published the Disability Capacity Review to 2032. This report set out analysis of both existing unmet need and expected demographic change which will drive demand for disability services now and into the future.

In responding to this future need, the Government has now approved a new **Action Plan for Disability Services 2024 to 2026**. This sets out three-year targets for capacity increases, as well as a suite of enabling actions designed to improve how we deliver and source services, including residential and respite services. This Plan was published by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman T.D., and Minister of State for Disabilities, Anne Rabbitte T.D, on 14 December and sets targeted capacity increases and overall strategic direction for the development of specialist disability services, including residential and respite services, for the coming three years.

The plan was developed by an interdepartmental Working Group with officials from Department of Health, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Department of Social Protection, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Health Service Executive.



The headline service improvements which are planned over the 2024-26 period include:

- Continued expansion of respite services, including alternative residential options,
- 500 new community-based residential care places to replace disability care in large institutional and campus-based settings, with a view to ending that form of provision by 2030, and
- Around 900 additional residential care places to tackle unmet needs and ensure supply keeps pace with demographic change.

The overall improvements set out will require additional investment which would see current expenditure grow by 25% over the three years of the plan. Furthermore, the planned expansion of residential services will require significant capital investment in order to provide the necessary housing.

The 2024 funding provision for specialist disability services includes €64 million to fund measures under the first year of the Action Plan. The annual envelope of current funding to deliver on the targets set out for the remaining three years of the plan will be negotiated through the annual Estimates process.

In the case of capital expenditure, the National Development Plan sets out a multi-annual envelope of commitments for investment in disability services over the next three years. These include the continuation of the decongregation programme, provision of additional community based residential services for those who require them and the provision of accommodation for disability network teams, therapy and day services.

The action plan can be accessed for reference [here](#). This sets out details of the actions and implementation oversight and monitoring arrangements. It is intended that the plan will be periodically reviewed and updated in light of progress, or new issues which may need to be addressed. It is also intended that a successor plan will be developed for the post 2026 period.

I trust that this information is of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kevin McCarthy', is written over a horizontal line.

Kevin McCarthy  
Secretary General

*Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015*