

National Ability Supports
System (NASS)

**NASS Regional Bulletin
for CHO 8 - Laois, Offaly,
Longford, Westmeath,
Louth and Meath, 2023**

1 Background

This bulletin is based on validated data extracted from the National Ability Supports System (NASS) at the end of December 2023 for people who received their main service in Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area 8. NASS is a national database that records information about current Health Service Executive (HSE) funded disability services¹ and services required in the next five years. Disability services can be required as a result of an intellectual disability (ID); developmental delay, physical, sensory, neurological,² learning, and speech and/or language disabilities; or autism. Mental health is only recorded on NASS where an individual is in receipt of a HSE funded disability service.

The purpose of NASS is to gather information from service providers in order to aid the planning, development, and organisation of HSE funded disability services. A person is eligible to be registered on NASS if they receive or require (either currently or within the next five years) a HSE funded disability service as identified by their service provider.

There are some 18-year-olds who have moved to adult services while others remain in children's services until they finish secondary school. In this bulletin, 'children' includes service users aged 19 years³ and under who are engaging with children's disability services, and 'adults' refers to those engaging with adult disability services.

This bulletin presents an overview of the information recorded on NASS for people engaging with disability services in CHO 8. In total, 4,528 people are included in this bulletin, of which 675 are children and 3,853 are adults.

¹ 'HSE funded disability services' refers to the budget the HSE uses to fund services for people with disabilities. In 2023, the overall budget for disability services was €2.4 billion. See <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/59a35-minister-anne-rabbitte-announces-disability-services-budget-for-2023/>

² A neurological disability can include epilepsy, spina bifida, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, acquired brain injury, and Parkinson's disease. This term applies to impairments of the nervous system.

³ There are a small number of people who remain in children's services past the age of 18, as they are still attending school.

1.1 Data collection

Information on NASS is captured under four headings:

- Service user details
- Primary carer details
- Disability type and diagnosis, and
- Services.

A primary disability should be recorded by the service provider for every person on NASS. There is also an option for reporting additional disability type(s). A primary disability refers to the disability which most restricts a person's ability to take part in daily life and/or the disability that gives rise to using/needing the most disability-funded services.

Within the Services heading, NASS captures 77 service options across six service types:

- Residential setting
- Day services
- Day respite
- Overnight respite
- Supports for daily living (for example, home support, a personal assistant, or community support), and
- Specialist supports/support services – including multidisciplinary services such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy and other specialised support services such as vision/aural rehabilitation services, assistive technology and animal-assisted therapy.

Service providers record information about current services funded through the HSE disability budget and services identified as being currently required or that will be required within the next five years.

1.2 Limitations of the data

It is important to note that information from the Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) was not provided to NASS in 2023. This is due to the delayed rollout of the HSE's dedicated children's case management system (CDNT-IMS) for use by the CDNTs. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of children reported on NASS for 2023 compared to 2022. There were over 33,000 children who were engaged in CDNTs in 2022 that were not reviewed in 2023. It is hoped that NASS will have improved coverage of children accessing HSE funded disability services for 2024 as a result of a planned upload of data from CDNT-IMS to NASS by year end.

Information on day services received in 2023 reported to NASS were compared to the HSE, National Day Services Database (NDSD). Information on day services received in 2023 on NASS is lower than what was reported in the NDSD. Work is underway to identify service providers who are not on NASS and, service providers who are underreporting their data to NASS.

2 Children in CHO 8 on NASS in 2023

There were 675 children registered in CHO 8 in 2023 as receiving either residential, respite, home support and/or specialised support services. Of the 675 children, 251 were receiving their main service in Co. Louth, 163 in Co. Meath, 87 in Co. Westmeath, 82 in Co. Offaly, 54 in Co. Laois, and 38 in Co. Longford.

As mentioned in Section 1.2, NASS did not receive complete updated data from the CDNTs due to the delayed roll out of the CDNT-IMS. Therefore, we are unable to report on children attending CDNTs for their multidisciplinary services.

3 Adults engaging with adult disability services in CHO 8

3.1 Number of adults registered on NASS in CHO 8 in 2023

There were 3,853 adults recorded as accessing or requiring a HSE funded disability service in CHO 8 in 2023. Of the 3,853 adults, 1,028 were receiving their main service in Co. Louth, 985 in Co. Meath, 699 in Co. Westmeath, 418 in Co. Offaly, 447 in Co. Laois and 276 in Co. Longford.

3.2 Demographic profile

There were more males (2,189; 57%) engaging with services in CHO 8 compared with females (1,664; 43%). Table 1 shows the age and sex breakdown of adults registered in CHO 8.

Table 1 Number of adults in disability services in CHO 8 by age group and sex, 2023

Age groups	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
18-24 years	525	13.6	271	7.0	796	20.7
25-39 years	541	14.0	375	9.7	916	23.8
40-59 years	725	18.8	631	16.4	1,356	35.2
60-69 years	305	7.9	264	6.9	569	14.8
≥ 70 years	93	2.4	123	3.2	216	5.6
Total	2,189	56.8	1,664	43.2	3,853	100.0

3.3 Occupational status

Information on occupational status was available for 93% (3,591) of the 3,853 adults accessing or requiring a HSE funded disability service in 2023, in CHO 8, of whom:

- Two-in-five (40%; 1,432) were in a training or day programme.
- Three-in-ten (30%; 1,071) were unable to work due to a disability.
- Over one-in-ten (11%; 399) were unemployed.
- Nearly one-in-ten (8%; 277) were in paid employment.
- Five-percent (196) were retired.
- The remaining 6% were students (4%; 158), engaged in home duties (1%; 37), or had 'other occupational status' recorded (1%; 21).

3.4 Living arrangements

Information on living arrangements was available for 96% (3,710) of the 3,853 adults accessing or requiring a HSE funded disability services in CHO 8, of whom:

- Nearly six-in-ten (58%; 2,158) were residing with family members.
- Three-in-ten (30%; 1,127) were living in a residential service setting.
- One-in-ten (10%; 375) were living alone.
- The remaining 2% (50) were living with non-relatives.

3.5 Reported disabilities

The most frequently reported disability amongst adults in CHO 8 was ID (2,402; 63%), followed by neurological disability (510; 13%), and physical disability (327; 9%) (Table 2).

Table 2 Primary disability among adults in disability services in CHO 8 on NASS by sex, 2023

Primary disability	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Intellectual	1,380	57.5	1,022	42.5	2,402	63.1
Neurological	253	49.6	257	50.4	510	13.4
Physical	169	51.7	158	48.3	327	8.6
Autism	222	77.9	63	22.1	285	7.5
Visual	102	52.6	92	47.4	194	5.1
Mental health	17	53.1	15	46.9	32	0.8
Hearing loss and/or deafness	17	60.7	11	39.3	28	0.7
Specific learning difficulty (other than intellectual)	~	~	5	55.6	~	~
DeafBlind-dual sensory	~	~	6	85.7	~	~
Speech and/or language	~	~	~	~	~	~
Not verified*	~	~	7	70.0	~	~
Total	2,170	57	1,637	43	3,807	100.0

~ In order to protect against the risk of indirect identification of individuals, values less than 5, or where individuals may be identified, have been suppressed.

* Not verified - Where the type of disability has not been verified for an individual by an appropriate healthcare professional.

Please note disability type is missing for 46 individuals.

3.6 Additional disabilities

A total of 1,690 adults had at least one additional disability along with their primary disability recorded. The most commonly reported additional disability was physical disability (602), followed by a speech and/or language disability (421), and autism (390).

3.7 Primary carer

Of adults registered on NASS who do not live in a residential setting (2,724; 71%), seven-in-ten (70%; 1,883) reported having a primary carer; almost all of these individuals live with their primary carer (93%; 1,743).

The majority (73%; 1,380) of primary carers were parents, 11% (209) were a sibling, 9% (178) were a wife/husband/partner, and 2% (34) were living with another relative. The remaining 5% were either a non-relative (3%; 48), or a daughter/son (2%; 32).

Age was recorded for 84% (1,588) of primary carers; 37% (592) of whom were aged 60 years and over.

4 Services

This section reports on the HSE funded disability services people with disabilities use and/or will require in the next five years, as reported by their service providers, in the following categories:

- Residential and assisted living services
- Day services
- Day and overnight respite, and
- Support services (including multidisciplinary, and specialised support services).

The information presented in this section represents whether a service was recorded as:

- **Current services:** The number of places accessed in the reporting year.
- **Enhancement required to current services:** The number of places accessed which require an enhancement in the next 12 months; for example, additional hours/days or additional support.
- **New services required:** The number of new places required for those not in receipt of that service but who require it now or will require it within the next five years.

Information on residential services, assisted living services and, respite (day and overnight) services is presented for the full cohort of people. Information on support services for children is incomplete; therefore, these data are only presented for adults.

Individuals may access one or more services within our broad categories of services outlined e.g. a person can access both centre based overnight respite and holiday overnight respite over the calendar year.

4.1 Current service provision

The following outlines 2023 data for current service provision in CHO 8.

- A total of 1,138 people were recorded as living in a residential service in CHO 8.
 - The majority (1,100) were adults.
 - A house in the community with four or fewer residents was the most commonly accessed residential service (598), followed by a community group home with between five and nine residents (474).
 - Of the 1,138 people living in a residential service, 12% (132) require an enhancement to their current service.
- A total of 878 people were in receipt of 902 assisted living services. Assisted living services include services captured on NASS as home support, and personal assistant.
 - Of these, 138 were children and 740 were adults.
 - Of the 902 assisted living services, 701 were home support services, and 201 were a personal assistant.
 - A total of 15% (139) of assisted living services require an enhancement.
- A total of 2,078 adults accessed at least one day service.
 - A day programme was the most commonly accessed (1,884; 90%) type of day service.
 - Rehabilitative training was received by 198 adults.
 - Of the 2,082 day services received, 19% (139) required an enhancement.
- Overall, 356 people accessed 375 day respite places in CHO 8.
 - Of these, 214 were children, and 142 were adults.
 - Of the day respite places provided, 212 were home-sharing arrangements, and 163 were centre-based respite.
 - Of the 375 day respite places accessed, 9% (32) required an enhancement.

- A total of 846 people accessed 890 overnight respite places.
 - Of these, 200 were children and 646 were adults.
 - The most commonly accessed type of overnight respite was a house in the community or a dedicated respite centre (729), followed by a home sharing arrangement (75).
 - A total of 22,444 nights of overnight respite were received.
 - Of the 890 overnight respite places accessed, 15% (130) required an enhancement.
- 1,886 adults received one or more support services from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service in 2023.
 - Overall, 4,978 support services were accessed during 2023.
 - A key worker was accessed by 373 people.
 - The most commonly accessed support services were occupational therapy (735), speech and language therapy (517), psychiatry (489), and physiotherapy (481).
 - Of the 4,978 support services accessed, 14% (687) required an enhancement.

4.2 New services required for 2023–2028

As outlined in Section 1, NASS collects information on the HSE funded disability services that people with disabilities currently use and/or will require in the next five years. New services required are the number of new places that service providers have identified as being required by people who are not yet in receipt of a particular type of service but who need it now or will need it within the next five years.

The following outlines data regarding new services required for 2023-2028, as identified by service providers in CHO 8.

- A total of 135 people were identified by service providers as requiring a residential service.
 - Almost all were adults.
 - Of the residential services required, 97% (131) are for a place in a house in the community with four or fewer residents.
 - Of the 135 residential places required, 87 (64%) are required immediately i.e. required in 2023.
- Service providers identified 117 people as requiring assisted living services.
 - Of these, 102 were for home support and 16 were for personal assistant services.
- There are 319 people requiring a day service in 2024⁴.
 - A day programme is required by 223 people, and rehabilitative training is required by 96 people.
- Overall, 144 people require overnight respite.
 - Of these, 112 were adults.
 - Overnight respite in a house in the community or a dedicated respite centre is the most commonly required (119).
- Overall, 438 adults require at least one support service from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service.
 - The support services most commonly required are physiotherapy (132), occupational therapy (106), and speech and language therapy (72).

⁴ Information on day services required in 2024 was provided for this bulletin by the HSE National Day Service Database (NDSD).

5 Publications and analysis

This bulletin provides an overview of data from NASS about people who received their main service in Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area 8. This bulletin should be read in conjunction with the main NASS bulletin 'Overview of people engaging with disability services, 2023'. Additional supplementary bulletins presenting information on people with an intellectual disability, physical or sensory disabilities, and by each CHO area are available on the Health Research Board (HRB) website <https://www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/disability-service-use-and-need/publications/>.

Requests for further analysis with more detailed or different breakdowns are welcomed. Please visit <https://www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/disability-service-use-and-need/request-data/> to access a data request form and return it to nass@hrb.ie.

