

HRB Supplementary Bulletin

National Ability Supports System (NASS)

**Overview of people with a physical or
sensory disability engaging with
disability services, 2022**

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National Ability Supports System 2022

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- The Health Service Executive, in particular the NASS personnel and National Disability Operations Team
- Service providers
- The representative bodies for the providers of services to people with disabilities, specifically the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, the Disability Federation of Ireland, and the Not for Profit Association, and
- The parents and families of people with a disability and their representative bodies, as well as all service users throughout Ireland.

Overview

This bulletin presents an overview of the information recorded for people with a physical or sensory disability reported as their primary disability on the National Ability Supports System (NASS) for 2022.

NASS is a national database that records information about Health Service Executive (HSE) disability-funded services¹ that are received or identified as required by a service provider as a result of an intellectual disability; developmental delay; physical, sensory, neurological,² learning, and speech and/or language disabilities; or autism.

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 18 years and under who are engaging with children's disability services, and 'adults' refers to those engaging with adult disability services.

Overall, 12,508 people with a primary physical or sensory disability are included in this bulletin, as their records on NASS were confirmed as being up to date by their main service provider or were newly registered on NASS in 2022.

Profile of people with a primary physical or sensory disability engaging with disability services, 2022:

- Overall, 12,508 people reported a physical or sensory primary disability; 8,858 (71%) were adults, and 3,650 (29%) were children.
- Almost half reported a neurological disability (5,824; 47%), 28% reported a physical disability (3,541), and 16% reported a visual disability (1,953).
- Half of all service users with a physical or sensory disability were male (50%, 6,295), and the overall median age was 44 years.
- In 2022, 426 people were in receipt of a residential service.
- One quarter (2,238) of adults accessed HSE funded day services, and over three fifths (63%; 5,583) of adults accessed at least one specialist support.
- A total of 3,598 nights of respite were accessed by 251 people throughout the 2022 data collection period.

¹ 'HSE disability -funded' refers to the budget the HSE uses to fund services for people with disabilities. In 2022, 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.

Services

Please note the limitations to this data as outlined in section 1.2. Information on residential services, respite (day and overnight) services, and supports for daily living is presented for the full cohort of people with a primary physical or sensory disability registered with NASS. Information on specialist supports for children is incomplete; therefore, these data are only presented for adults.

Current service provision

The following outlines 2022 data for current service provision for those with a primary physical or sensory disability registered with NASS.

- A total of 426 people were recorded as living in a residential setting.
- A total of 1,467 people accessed a home support service.
- Among adults only, 2,238 accessed either a day programme, rehabilitative training, or neuro rehabilitative training.
- A total of 69 people accessed day respite.
- Overall, 251 people accessed overnight respite.
 - Of these, 13 were children and 238 were adults.
 - A total of 3,598 nights were accessed, with a median of 10 nights received by individuals annually.
- Overall, 2,869 children were assessed and found to require the support of a multidisciplinary Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT).³
- A total of 5,583 adults received at least one specialist support. The most commonly provided specialist supports were key worker (2,006), followed by physiotherapy (1,371), and vision rehabilitation services (1,111).
- A total of 1,196 people had personal assistant recorded as a service in 2022.

³ Information about children's disability services is available on the HSE website at <https://www2.hse.ie/services/disability/childrens-services/services/overview/>

New services required for 2022-2027

The following outlines data regarding new services required for 2022-2027, as identified by service providers for those with a primary physical or sensory disability registered with NASS.

- A total of 74 people require a residential service.
- A total of 149 people require overnight respite.
- Service providers identified 28 people as requiring a day respite service.
- Home support was required by 117 people.

New services required for 2022-2027 (identified for adults only)

- A total of 65 adults were identified as requiring either a day programme or rehabilitative training.
- A total of 805 adults required at least one specialist supports.
 - Overall, 1,096 specialist supports were identified as required. Physiotherapy (295), chiropody (159), occupational therapy (133) and neuropsychology (76) were the most commonly required.

1 Background

This bulletin presents an overview of the information recorded for people who had a physical or sensory disability recorded as a primary disability on the National Ability Supports System (NASS) for 2022. This is a supplementary bulletin to be read in conjunction with 'Overview of people engaging with disability services, 2022' (<https://www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/disability-service-use-and-need/publications/>).

NASS is a national database that records information about Health Service Executive (HSE) disability-funded services that are received or identified as required by a service provider as a result of an intellectual disability; developmental delay; physical, sensory, neurological, learning, and speech and/or language disabilities; or autism.

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 18 years and under who are engaging with children's disability services, and 'adults' refers to those engaging with adult disability services.

Overall, 12,508 people with a primary physical or sensory disability are included in this bulletin, as their records on NASS were confirmed as being up to date by their main service provider or were newly registered on NASS in 2022. Of these, 8,858 are adults and 3,650 are children.

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 section, 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 (for example, physiotherapy, speech and/or language therapy, or occupational 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 5 years.

1.2 Limitations of data

It is important to note that the data returned for children by the newly established Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are less complete than the data provided by service providers for adults accessing HSE disability-funded services. Overall, a significant increase in the number of children registered on NASS was achieved in 2022. However, the data are largely incomplete for most of these children. Work is ongoing with our partners in the HSE to improve the completeness of these data.

2 Profile of people with a physical or sensory disability as a primary disability, who are engaging with disability services

2.1 Number of people with a physical or sensory disability as a primary disability registered on NASS in 2022

A total of 12,508 people reporting a physical or sensory disability as a primary disability are included in this report.

The breakdown of registrations by Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area of service is listed in Table 1. The majority of service users who had a physical or sensory disability availed of their service in CHO area 9 (2,132; 17%) followed by CHO area 1 (2,114; 17%).

Among adults, CHO area 1 had the highest number of registrations (1,867; 21%), followed by CHO area 4 (1,375; 16%) and CHO area 9 (1,243; 14%). Among children, CHO area 9 had the highest number of registrations (889; 24%), followed by CHO area 2 (640; 18%) and CHO area 8 (582; 16%).

Table 1 Number of people with a primary physical or sensory disability registered on NASS by CHO area of service, 2022

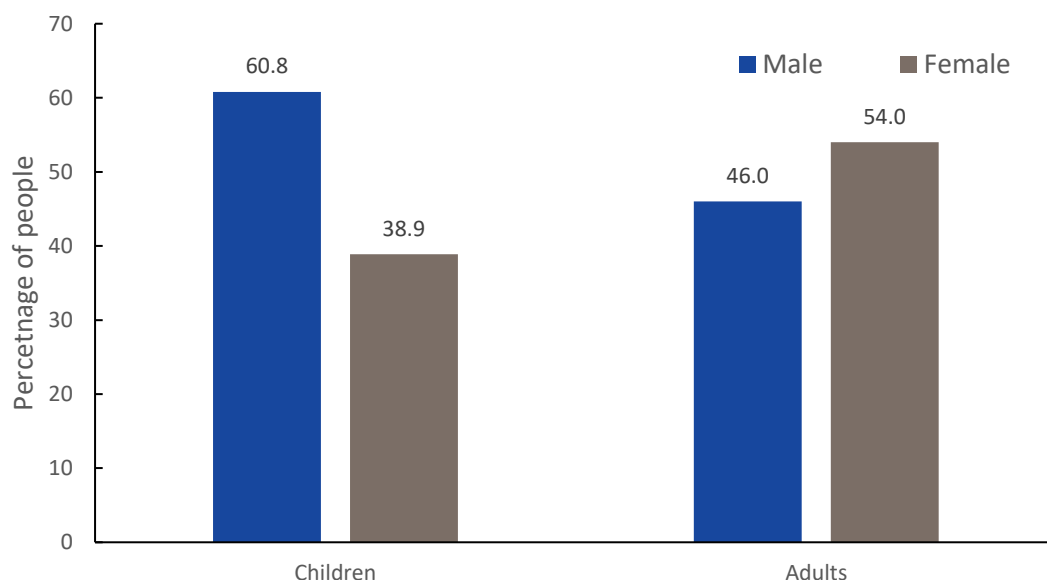
| CHO area of service | Children | | Adults | | Total population | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| CHO 1 - Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan | 247 | 6.8 | 1,867 | 21.1 | 2,114 | 16.9 |
| CHO 2 - Galway, Roscommon, Mayo | 640 | 17.5 | 859 | 9.7 | 1,499 | 12.0 |
| CHO 3 - Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary | 141 | 3.9 | 892 | 10.1 | 1,033 | 8.3 |
| CHO 4 - Kerry, Cork | 216 | 5.9 | 1,375 | 15.5 | 1,591 | 12.7 |
| CHO 5 - South Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford | 387 | 10.6 | 746 | 8.4 | 1,133 | 9.1 |
| CHO 6 - Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin South East | 57 | 1.6 | 367 | 4.1 | 424 | 3.4 |
| CHO 7 - Kildare, West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, Dublin South West | 491 | 13.5 | 497 | 5.6 | 988 | 7.9 |
| CHO 8 - Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Louth, Meath | 582 | 15.9 | 1,011 | 11.4 | 1,593 | 12.7 |
| CHO 9 - Dublin North, Dublin North Central, Dublin North West | 889 | 24.4 | 1,243 | 14.0 | 2,132 | 17.0 |
| Outside Ireland | 0 | 0 | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ |
| Total | 3,650 | 100.0 | 8,858 | 100.0 | 12,508 | 100.0 |

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

2.2 Demographic profile

Half of all people with a primary physical or sensory disability were male (50%; 6,295). The percentage of males was higher among children in comparison to adults (61% vs 46%). A breakdown of sex by cohort is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Sex breakdown of children and adults with a primary physical or sensory disability registered on NASS, 2022



* Sex at birth was missing for 12 children.

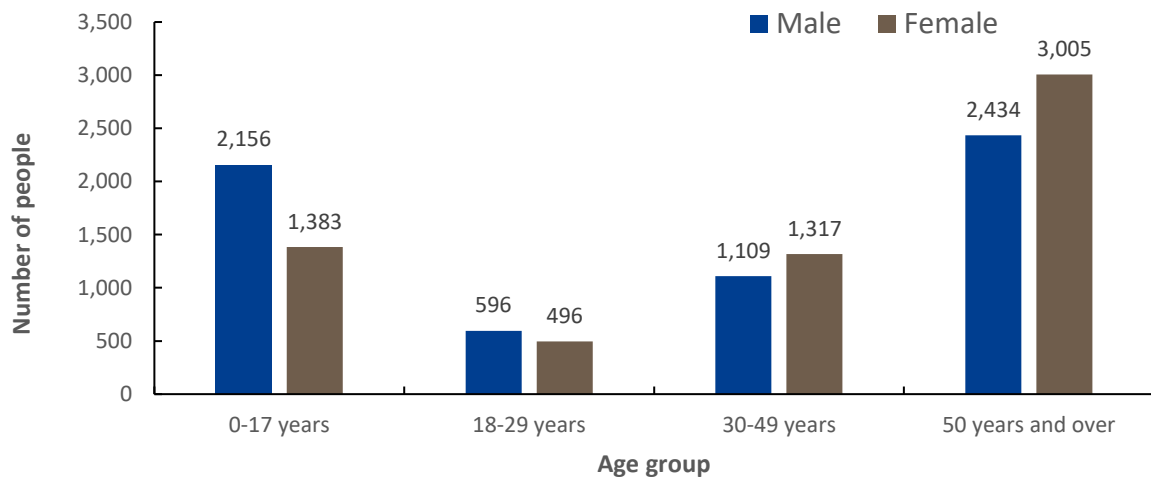
The median age of people with a primary physical or sensory disability was 44 years. Nearly three in ten people were aged between 40 and 59 years (29%; 3,662) and a further 18% (2,300) were aged between 60 and 69 years (Table 2).

Table 2 Age breakdown among those with a primary physical or sensory disability registered on NASS, 2022

| Age Group | n | % |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 0-4 years | 571 | 4.6 |
| 5-12 years | 1,885 | 15.1 |
| 13-17 years | 1,095 | 8.8 |
| 18-24 years | 802 | 6.4 |
| 25-39 years | 1,206 | 9.6 |
| 40-59 years | 3,662 | 29.3 |
| 60-69 years | 2,300 | 18.4 |
| ≥70 years | 987 | 7.9 |
| Total | 12,508 | 100.0 |

The majority of people with a primary physical or sensory disability were male in the younger age groups (0-29 years), and the opposite was true for the older age groups. Figure 2 below shows the sex breakdown in each age group.

Figure 2 Number of people with a primary physical or sensory disability registered on NASS by age and sex, 2022



* Sex at birth was missing for 12 children.

2.3 Additional sociodemographic data for adults only

Information on ethnicity, living arrangements, employment and primary carer was limited for children due to differing methods of data collection. As a result, the following section focuses on the 8,858 **adults only**.

- Where information was known (7,012; 79% of adults), the majority of adults self-identified as Irish (6,532; 93%) and a further 5% (337) identified as any other white background.
- Where information was known (7,324; 83% of adults), 38% (2,799) reported being unable to work due to disability. A further 16% (1,144) reported being retired; 15% (1,086) reported being unemployed; and 13% (915) reported being in paid employment.
- Where information was known (7,846; 89% of adults), most adults were living with family members (68%; 5,359). Almost one quarter of adults were living alone (23%; 1,839), 7% (545) were living in a residential setting, while 1% (103) were living with non-relatives.
- Of the adults with a primary physical or sensory disability who do not live in a residential setting (7,301), just under half (3,334; 46%) reported having a primary carer. Most of these adults report living with their primary carer (2,785; 84%).
 - Four in ten of primary carers were a wife/husband or partner (1,370; 41%) or a parent (1,192; 36%). Age was recorded for 87% (2,895) of primary carers; of whom, 34% (977) were aged between 50 and 59 years, and 37% (1,069) were aged 60 years and older.

2.4 Reported disabilities

Almost half of those with a primary physical or sensory disability reported a neurological disability (5,824; 47%), followed by physical (3,541; 28%), and visual (1,953; 16%) (Table 4).

Table 4 Primary physical and sensory disabilities by sex registered on NASS, 2022

| | Male | | Female | | Data on sex not provided | | Total | |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Neurological | 2,739 | 47.0 | 3,084 | 53.0 | ~ | ~ | 5,824 | 46.6 |
| Physical | 1,875 | 53.0 | 1,666 | 47.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3,541 | 28.3 |
| Visual | 1,011 | 51.8 | 942 | 48.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 1,953 | 15.6 |
| Hearing loss and/or deafness | 361 | 47.5 | 398 | 52.4 | ~ | ~ | 760 | 6.1 |
| Speech and/or language | 261 | 75.0 | 86 | 24.7 | ~ | ~ | 348 | 2.8 |
| DeafBlind (dual sensory) | 48 | 58.5 | 25 | 30.5 | 9 | 11.0 | 82 | 0.7 |
| Total | 6,295 | 50.3 | 6,201 | 49.6 | 12 | 0.1 | 12,508 | 100.0 |

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

2.5 Additional disabilities

Over one in four of those recorded on NASS with a primary physical or sensory disability had an additional disability recorded (3,338; 27%). The most commonly recorded additional disability type was physical disability (1,702; 14%), followed by a speech and/or language disability (518; 4%), and intellectual disability (353; 3%).

The breakdown of additional disability types by primary disability is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Additional disabilities among those with a primary physical or sensory disability registered on NASS, 2022

| Additional disability | Primary disability categories | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Neurological | | Physical | | Visual | | Hearing loss and/or deafness | | Speech and/or language | | DeafBlind (dual sensory) | | Total | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Total population | 5,824 | 100 | 3,541 | 100 | 1,953 | 100 | 760 | 100 | 348 | 100 | 82 | 100 | 12,508 | 100 |
| Physical | 1,488 | 25.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 83 | 4.2 | 51 | 6.7 | 78 | 22.4 | 2 | 2.4 | 1,702 | 13.6 |
| Speech and/or language | 216 | 3.7 | 238 | 6.7 | 11 | 0.6 | 49 | 6.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 4.9 | 518 | 4.1 |
| Intellectual | 97 | 1.7 | 170 | 4.8 | 54 | 2.8 | 21 | 2.8 | 6 | 1.7 | 5 | 6.1 | 353 | 2.8 |
| Visual | 193 | 3.3 | 83 | 2.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 18 | 2.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 294 | 2.4 |
| Neurological | 0 | 0.0 | 210 | 5.9 | 53 | 2.7 | 6 | 0.8 | 3 | 0.9 | 1 | 1.2 | 273 | 2.2 |
| Mental Health | 134 | 2.3 | 61 | 1.7 | 23 | 1.2 | 8 | 1.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 3.7 | 229 | 1.8 |
| Hearing loss and/or deafness | 65 | 1.1 | 45 | 1.3 | 24 | 1.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.3 | 4 | 4.9 | 139 | 1.1 |
| Autism | 23 | 0.4 | 52 | 1.5 | 27 | 1.4 | 13 | 1.7 | 7 | 2.0 | 1 | 1.2 | 123 | 1.0 |
| Other* | 38 | 0.7 | 85 | 2.4 | 37 | 1.9 | 31 | 4.1 | 8 | 2.3 | 2 | 2.4 | 201 | 1.6 |

* Other includes: Developmental delay (children aged under 10 years only), specific learning disorder (other than intellectual), not verified and deafblind-dual sensory.

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

Note more than one additional disability may be recorded for a person and as a result, total percentages add up to more than 100.

3 Services

The current service use and services needed now or within the next five years for those with a primary physical or sensory disability registered on NASS is displayed in the following section. NASS collects information on the HSE disability-funded services people with disabilities currently use and/or require in the next five years in the following categories: Residential, Day, Respite (day and overnight), Supports for daily living and Specialist supports.

The service tables presented in this section represent whether a service was recorded as:

Current services: The number of places accessed in the reporting year.

Enhancement required to current places: 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 additional places required for those not in receipt of that service but who require it now or within the next five years.

Information on residential services, respite (day and overnight) services, and supports for daily living have a satisfactory level of detail and as such will be presented for the full cohort of people who have a primary physical or sensory disability. Information on day services and specialist supports will only be presented for adults.

Individuals may access one or more service within our broad categories of services outlined e.g. a person can access both centre based day respite and day respite in their own home over the calendar year.

3.1 Current service provision

3.1.1 Residential and home support services

- In total, 426 people were living in a residential setting, of those 99% (422) were adults.
 - One half (50%) of these people were either living in a house in the community (110) or in a nursing home (103).
 - All of the individuals living in a nursing home were adults and the majority were aged 50 years and over (81; 79%); however, just over one-fifth (22; 21%) were aged between 18 and 49 years.
 - An enhancement was required for 41 current residential places, and 11 of these enhancements were required for a house in the community.
- 1,467 people were in receipt of home support with 192 requiring an enhancement to the current service.

3.1.2 Day service (Adults only)

- 2,238 adults accessed HSE funded day services (day programme, rehabilitative training, or neuro rehabilitative training). The majority (84%; 1,878) of adults accessed a day programme, while 208 accessed rehabilitative training, and 194 accessed neuro rehabilitative training.
- 644 adults required an enhancement to their HSE funded day service. An enhancement was required to 514 day programmes, 58 rehabilitative training places, and 77 neuro rehabilitative places.

3.1.3 Day Respite

- In total, 69 people with a primary physical or sensory disability accessed day respite places.
 - Of these, 19 were children and 50 were adults.
 - Of the day respite services provided, the majority were centre-based respite (48), followed by own home respite (15).
 - No required enhancements were reported.

3.1.4 Overnight Respite

- In total, 251 people accessed overnight respite places.
 - Of these, 13 were children and 238 were adults.
 - Overnight respite in a house in the community or dedicated respite centre was the most frequently reported (162).
 - A total of 3,598 nights were accessed, with a median of 10 nights received by individuals annually.
 - An enhancement was required for 40 people currently accessing overnight respite.

3.1.5 Support services

- 1,196 people accessed the services of a personal assistant, with 161 requiring an enhancement to the current service.
- In total, 2,869 children were assessed and found to require the support of a multidisciplinary Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT).
- More than 3 in 5 adults (5,583, 63%) with a primary physical or sensory disability accessed at least one specialist support. A total of 9,681 specialist supports were provided in 2022.
 - The most commonly provided specialist support was a key worker (2,006), followed by physiotherapy (1,371), and vision rehabilitation services (1,111).
 - A total of 665 adults required 930 enhancements, mainly for physiotherapy (234) and vision rehabilitation services (142).
- 235 people accessed community support services, with 37 requiring an enhancement to the current service.
- 228 people accessed peer support services, with 37 requiring an enhancement to the current service.

3.2 Services required 2022-2027

As outlined in Section 1, NASS collects information on the HSE disability-funded services that people with disabilities currently use and/or will require in the next 5 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 5 years.

The following outlines data regarding new services required for 2022-2027, as identified by service providers for people registered on NASS with a primary physical or sensory disability.

3.2.1 Residential and home support requirements

- An additional 74 people require a residential service, and 52 of these are for a house in the community.
- A home support service was required by 117 people.

3.2.2 Day service requirements (adults only)

- An additional 65 adults require a day programme while 14 require rehabilitative training and 7 adults require neuro rehabilitative training.

3.2.3 Day respite requirements

- An additional 28 people were required day respite places. Centre-based respite (including clubs and camps) and own home respite are the most commonly required (17 and 12 respectively).

3.2.4 Overnight respite

- An additional 149 people required overnight respite places, and overnight respite in a house in the community or a dedicated respite centre was the most commonly required (69).

3.2.5 Support service requirements

- An additional 67 people required a personal assistant. Community support (56), transport services (52) and peer support (41) were the next most commonly required.

3.2.6 Specialist support service requirements (identified for adults only)

- An additional 805 adults required 1,096 specialist supports. Physiotherapy (295), chiropody (159), occupational therapy (133), and neuropsychology (76) were the most reported.

4 Publications and analysis

This bulletin provides an overview of data recorded on NASS about people with either a physical or sensory disability recorded as their primary disability. This bulletin should be read in conjunction with our main bulletin 'Overview of people engaging with disability services, 2022'. Additional supplementary bulletins presenting information on people with an intellectual disability, and autism and by CHO area are available on the 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.