

HRB Bulletin
**National Ability Supports
System (NASS)**

**Overview of
people engaging
with disability
services, 2025**

**Claire Casey, Sarah Fanagan,
Nicola Caffrey, Lorna Cassidy,
Joseph Beegan and Ena Lynn**

Irish Statistical Code of Practice (ISSCOP)



In December 2024 the National Ability Supports System (NASS) secured the Irish Statistical Code of Practice (ISSCOP) certification which affirms the HRB's commitment to upholding the highest standards in data quality.

The Central Statistics Office developed this code to enhance the national data ecosystem, based on the European Statistics Code of Practice. A key objective of ISSCOP is safeguarding trust in Irish official statistics. To achieve this, official statistics must demonstrate adherence to the key principles aligned to ISSCOP. There are five key principles:

Professional Independence: The production of official statistics is based on the application of independent, transparent, and objective standards and free from any political or other external interference.

Timeliness and punctuality: Official statistics are released in a timely and punctual manner in accordance with pre-determined and publicly available release calendar.

Accessibility and clarity: Official statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with the appropriate supporting information.

Commitment to Quality: Compilers of official statistics should systematically and regularly review processes to support continual improvement in process and product quality.

Confidentiality: Public authorities that produce official statistics must ensure that statistical outputs do not lead to the direct or indirect identification of an individual or entity.

Published by:

Health Research Board, Dublin

An Bord Taighde Sláinte

© Health Research Board 2026

HRB StatLink Series ISSN 2737-7652

HRB StatLink Series 31

National Ability Supports System (NASS)

Overview of people engaging with disability services, 2025

Claire Casey, Sarah Fanagan, Nicola Caffrey, Lorna Cassidy,
Joseph Beegan and Ena Lynn

Table of Contents

Glossary	vi
Overview	1
1 Background	6
1.1 Data collection	7
1.2 Data Quality	8
2 Number of children on NASS in 2025	10
3 Adults engaging with disability services	11
3.1 Number of adults on NASS in 2025	11
3.2 Demographic profile	14
3.3 Occupational status	15
3.4 Living arrangements	15
3.5 Reported disabilities	16
3.6 Additional disabilities	17
3.7 Primary carer	19
4 Services	20
4.1 Current service provision	21
4.2 New services required for 2025–2030	28
5 Publications and analysis	33
Acknowledgements	34

Glossary

Accommodation on campus – A centre or small cluster of houses that are located on a HSE or other service providers campus.

Adult – Person aged 18 years and older engaging with adult disability services.

Child – Person aged under 18 years¹ who is engaging with children’s disability services.

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.

Home-sharing – A home sharing/shared living registered family provides full-time care to a person with a disability in their home in the community and cares for that person as a member of their family on a permanent arrangement (with short breaks to another home sharing family or the person’s own family if necessary). A retainer and expenses are paid to the family. (Also known as a host family).

Intellectual disability – Conditions appearing in the developmental period (age 0–18 years) associated with impairments of mental functions, difficulties in learning and performing certain daily life skills and limitations of adaptive skills in the context of community environments compared to others of the same age. Includes but is not limited to: Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, Klinefelter syndrome.

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

Neurological disability – 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.

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.

Personal assistance² – Personal Assistance is a person-directed / user-led, human delivered support available to a disabled person. A Personal Assistant (PA) is chosen and directed by the disabled person to provide person-to-person assistance for a range of daily activities, both inside and outside the home. This remains at the discretion and direction of the individual, thus promoting choice and control to empower the disabled person to live a life of self-determination. The disabled person may devolve administrative functions for their PA to a service provider.

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

2 Preliminary definition of personal assistance from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality PA working group – March, 2026.

Overview



This bulletin is based on validated data extracted from the National Ability Supports System (NASS) at the end of December 2025.

The purpose of NASS is to gather information to aid the planning, development, and organisation of HSE funded disability services.³ 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.

Information on the number of adult day services required in 2026 was provided for this bulletin by the HSE National Day Service Database (NDSD).

Overall, the records of 101,373 people are included in this bulletin, as they were confirmed as being up to date by their service provider or were newly registered on NASS in 2025. Of these, 63,085 are children and 38,288 are adults. Please note that while information on 101,373 people was submitted to NASS, we estimate that approximately 95,000 people are actively engaging with or require a HSE-funded disability service. Information on children referred for assessment for a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) is included in the overall 101,373.

³ 'HSE funded disability services' refers to the budget the HSE uses to fund services for people with disabilities. In 2025, the overall budget for disability services was €3.2 billion. See <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2025-07-29/2266/speech/1803/>

Number of children on NASS in 2025

There were 63,085 children on NASS in contact with a HSE funded disability service in 2025.

The number of children registered on NASS in 2025 has increased substantially compared to 2024. This is as result of information being provided to NASS from the HSE's dedicated children's case management system (CDNTIMS). There were 61,570 children in contact with a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) in 2025. This includes children whose referral assessment for a CDNT is underway, children who are on a CDNT waiting list, are currently receiving services from a CDNT and children who have been discharged from a CDNT in 2025.

Adults engaging with disability services

There were 38,288 adults on NASS accessing or requiring a disability service in 2025. There was a 10% increase in the number of adults reviewed on NASS in 2025, compared to 2024 (36,652 in 2024; 38,288 in 2025).

- More male (21,247; 55%) than female (17,038; 45%) adults were recorded on NASS in 2025.
- Nearly one-in-five (17%; 6,667) adults were aged 18 – 24 years and more than one-in-three (35%; 13,336) adults were in the 40 – 59 years age group:
 - 18 – 24 years: 6,667 (17%),
 - 25 – 39 years: 9,095 (24%),
 - 40 – 59 years: 13,336 (35%),
 - 60 – 69 years: 6,022 (16%), and
 - 70 years and over: 3,168 (8%).
- The most frequently reported primary disability type was intellectual disability (ID) (19,490; 51%), followed by neurological disability (8,351; 22%), and autism (3,703; 10%).
- Nearly three-in-five (58%; 17,129) adults on NASS reported having a primary carer; the majority of these adults live with their primary carer (92%; 15,696). Age was recorded for more than four-fifths (83%; 14,165) of primary carers, of whom 38% (5,341) were aged 60 years and over.
 - Of the primary carers aged 60 years and over; 3,202 (60%) were aged between 60 – 69 years, 1,623 (30%) were aged between 70 – 79 years, and 516 (10%) were aged 80 years and over.

Services

Please note the limitations of this data as outlined in section 1.2. Information on residential services, assisted living services, and respite (day and overnight) services is presented for the full cohort of people registered with NASS. Due to the ongoing roll out of the CDNTIMS in 2025, information on specialised support services for children is incomplete, therefore, data on support services are only presented for adults. Records underwent review by the service providers throughout the reported year.

Current service provision

The following outlines 2025 data for current service provision.

- Overall, 8,340 people were recorded as living in a residential setting.
 - Of these, 8,094 were adults and 246 were children.
 - A residential house in the community (6,399; 77%) was the most common type of residential setting followed by people living in campus based accommodation (1,606; 19%).
 - Eighty-six percent (7,167) of people living in a residential setting had an ID.
- Overall, 8,613 people were in receipt of 8,850 assisted living services. Assisted living services include services captured on NASS as home support, and personal assistant (PA).
 - Of these, 7,089 were adults and 1,524 were children.
 - Over four-in-ten (43%; 3,841) of those who received assisted living services were aged between 19–54 years.
 - Of the 8,850 assisted living services:
 - 6,595 were home support, and
 - 2,255 were PA services.
 - Nearly seven-in-ten (69%; 5,519) people in receipt of assisted living services were living with family, and over one-quarter (26%; 2,073) were living alone.

- Just over one-half (54%; 20,717) of adults accessed 21,223 day services during 2025, of which:
 - 19,390 (91%) were day programmes, and
 - 1,833 (9%) were rehabilitative training.
- In total, 1,951 people accessed 1,986 day respite places.
 - Of these, 746 were adults and 1,205 were children.
 - Of the day respite places provided in 2025, 1,622 were centre-based respite places, and 364 were home sharing places.
- Overnight respite was provided to 6,021 people.
 - Of these, 4,599 were adults and 1,422 were children.
 - A total of 151,446 nights were accessed, with individuals accessing a median of 17 nights (Range 1-365 nights) (16 nights (Range 1-365 nights) for adults, 21 nights (Range 1-322 nights) for children) during 2025.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%; 24,222) of adults received at least one support service from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service in 2025.
 - A total of 12,645 (65%) adults with an ID received one or more support services. The most commonly accessed support services were social work (5,312), speech and language therapy (4,329), and nursing (4,060).
 - Sixty-nine percent (9,896) of adults with a physical or sensory disability received one or more support services. The most commonly accessed support services were peer support (2,329), vision rehabilitation (1,536), and physiotherapy (1,190).
 - Forty-four percent (1,611) of autistic adults received one or more support services. A key worker was accessed by 1,093 people. The most commonly accessed support services were social work (189), clinical psychology (187) and behavioural therapy (177).

New services required for 2025–2030

The following outlines data regarding new services required for 2025–2030, as identified by service providers.

- Overall, 2,197 people are reported as requiring a residential service.
 - Of these, 2,163 were adults and 34 were children.
 - Ninety-seven percent (2,124) of residential services required are for a place in a house in the community.
 - Nearly three-in-four residential services required are needed immediately i.e. required in 2025 (72%; 1,590).

- More than four-in-five adults requiring a residential service (83%; 1,794) have a primary carer; of those primary carers, nearly one-half (46%; 824) are aged 60 years and over.
- Service providers identified 877 people as requiring 906 assisted living services.
 - Of these, 751 were adults and 126 were children.
 - Sixty percent (531) were aged 35 years and over, one-in-four people (26%; 226) were aged 18 – 34 years, and 14% (120) were aged under 18 years.
 - Of the 906 assisted living services required:
 - 706 were identified as home support, and
 - 200 were identified as PA services.
 - Just over half (53%; 461) have an ID and 29% (251) have a physical or sensory disability.
- Information on day services required in 2026 was provided for this bulletin by the HSE National Day Service Database (NDSD).
 - 2,365 were identified as requiring an adult day service, and
 - 1,000 were identified as requiring rehabilitative training.
- Overall, 1,462 people require overnight respite.
 - Of these, 1,289 were adults and 173 were children.
 - Just over three-quarters (77%;1,121) of those who require overnight respite services have an ID, 11% (165) have a physical or sensory disability, and 10% (151) are Autistic.

New services required for 2025–2030 (identified for adults only)

The following outlines data regarding new services required for 2025–2030 that are identified for adults only.

- Over one-tenth (12%; 4,669) of adults require at least one support service from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service.
 - The support services most commonly required are occupational therapy (1,209), physiotherapy (1,103), speech and language therapy (710), and clinical psychology (673).

1 Background

This bulletin is based on validated data extracted from the National Ability Supports System (NASS) at the end of December 2025. NASS is a national database that records information about current Health Service Executive (HSE) funded disability services and services required now, or in the next five years. HSE funded disability services can be required due to an intellectual disability (ID); developmental delay; physical, sensory, neurological, 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 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.

Information on the number of day services required in 2026 was provided by the HSE National Day Service Database (NDSD). Information on the number of children in contact with a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) was provided to NASS in 2025 from the HSE's dedicated children's case management system (CDNTIMS).

Overall, the records of 101,373 people are included in this bulletin, as they were confirmed as being up to date by their service provider or were newly registered on NASS in 2025. Of these, 63,085 are children and 38,288 are adults. Please note that while information on 101,373 people was submitted to NASS, we estimate that approximately 95,000 people are actively engaging with or require a HSE-funded disability service. Information on children referred for assessment for a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) is included in the overall 101,373.

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 HSE funded disability services.

Within the Services heading, NASS captures 76 service options across six service types:

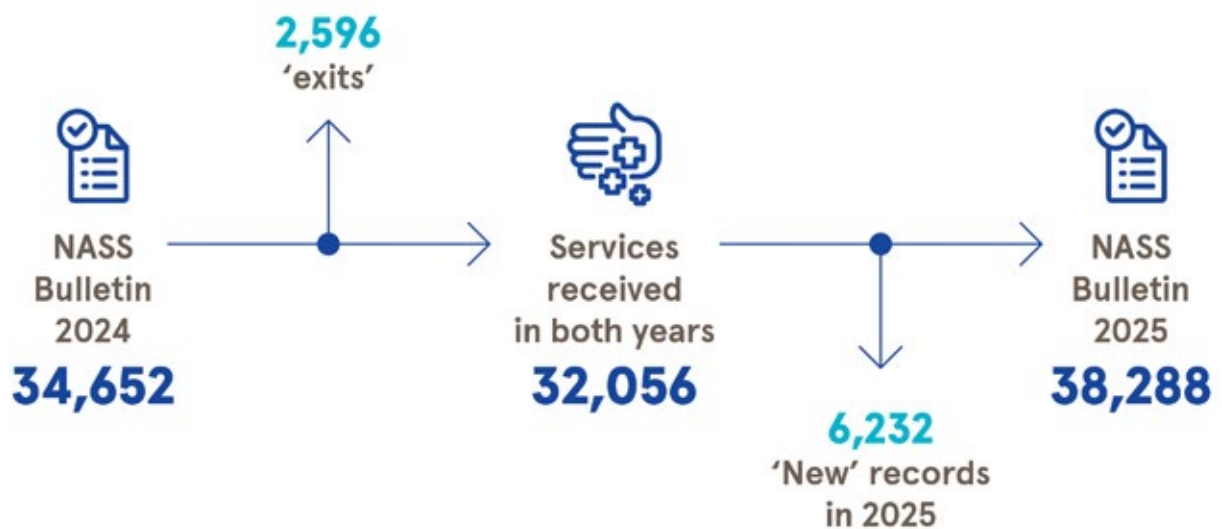
- Residential setting
- Day services
- Day respite
- Overnight respite
- Supports for daily living (for example, home support, a personal assistant, or community support), and
- Specialist supports/support services – including multidisciplinary services such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy and other specialised support services targeted towards people with specific needs 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. Coverage of data provided by service providers has continuously improved and is virtually complete for major providers of HSE funded disability services.

1.2 Data Quality

The number of adult records on NASS increased by 10% in 2025 compared with 2024. Figure 1 explains the movement of adults on NASS between 2024 and 2025. This increase was largely due to new registrations (4,655) and individuals returning to service (1,196). Additionally, 381 children’s service users in 2024 moved to adult services in 2025. Overall, one-in-four (26%; 1,640) new or returning adult service users were aged between 18 – 24 years old. Approximately 2,596 adults registered on NASS in 2024 were no longer in receipt of or requiring HSE funded disability services in 2025 (2,164) or had died during the year (432).

Figure 1 Persons supported in adult HSE funded disability services and recorded on NASS between 2024 and 2025



Information on the number of children in contact with a Children’s Disability Network Team (CDNT) was provided to NASS in 2025 from the HSE’s dedicated children’s case management system (CDNTIMS). Information on services provided by the CDNTs was not available for all teams. This is due to 2025 being a rollout year for the CDNTIMS with some children’s teams only beginning to use the system in the second half of the year. This is expected to be rectified in 2026 with data to be provided to NASS on the multidisciplinary services delivered to children by the CDNTs.

Information on the status of children with their CDNT was not provided. The information provided to NASS includes children referred to a CDNT with an assessment underway, on a CDNT waiting list, on the open caseload of a CDNT, and discharged from a CDNT during 2025. Therefore, it is only possible to report on the number of children in contact with a CDNT during 2025. It is estimated that 20% of the information provided to NASS from the CDNTIMS related to children who were referred and awaiting assessment by a CDNT, or who were discharged from a CDNT in 2025. It is expected that information on the status of each child will be received in 2026.

Compared with the HSE residential tracker, NASS accounts for approximately 97% of residential service users recorded at the end of December 2025 (8,340 NASS; 8,619 HSE).

Information on day services received in 2025 reported to NASS were compared to the HSE NDSD. Information on day services received in 2025 on NASS is lower than what was reported in the NDSD (20,621 NDSD at the end of December 2025; 19,390 NASS). Work is underway to identify service providers who are not on NASS and, service providers who are underreporting their data to NASS.

The number of people receiving assisted living services (home support or PA) recorded on NASS is lower than figures reported in the HSE 2025 key performance indicators (approximately 78% coverage). This difference may reflect methodological variation: NASS records services at person level, counting individuals once where multiple providers are involved, whereas HSE KPI data are collected at provider level and may therefore result in double counting.⁴ Work will continue with the HSE to improve the accurate capture of home support and PA services on NASS.

4 Example # 2: Martin received 10 home support hours per week from Agency A. He was assessed as having an increased need and now receives 5 additional home support hours from Agency B. Martin is returned by each agency as 1 person. It is acknowledged that this is a “double count” but until a system of unique identification is established, both agencies must return what they are providing/funded by the HSE under this KPI. Example provided in DIS69 – No of people with a disability in receipt of Home Support Services (ID/Autism and Physical and Sensory Disability)

2 Number of children on NASS in 2025

There were **63,085** children on NASS in contact with a HSE funded disability service in 2025.

The number of children registered on NASS in 2025 has increased substantially compared to 2024. This is as result of information being provided to NASS from the HSE's dedicated children's case management system (CDNTIMS). There were 61,570 children in contact with a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) in 2025. This includes children whose referral assessment for a CDNT is underway, children who are on a CDNT waiting list, are currently receiving services from a CDNT and children who have been discharged from a CDNT in 2025.

Table 1 Number of children on NASS by Health Region of Service, 2025

	NASS 2025 registrations	Share of NASS registrations
Health Region of service	n	%
Dublin and North East	13,940	22.1
Dublin and Midlands	13,832	21.9
Dublin and South East	10,222	16.2
South West	9,167	14.5
Mid West	8,289	13.1
West and North West	7,635	12.1
Total	63,085	100.0

3 Adults engaging with disability services

3.1 Number of adults on NASS in 2025

There were **38,288** adults recorded as accessing or requiring a HSE funded disability service in 2025. This represents 98% of all adult records registered on NASS; 2% of adult records on NASS in 2024 were not reviewed in 2025 and thus were not included in this bulletin.

There was a 10% increase in the number of adult records registered/reviewed on NASS in 2025, compared to 2024 (34,652 in 2024; 38,288 in 2025).

Table 2 Number of adults on NASS by Health Region of Service, 2025

	NASS 2025 registrations	Share of NASS registrations
Health Region of service	n	%
Dublin and North East	8,418	22.0
Dublin and Midlands	6,380	16.7
Dublin and South East	7,907	20.7
South West	6,313	16.5
Mid West	3,086	8.1
West and North West	6,184	16.2
Total	38,288	100.0

The proportion of the adult population accessing disability services in Ireland per 1,000 of the general population aged 18 years and over was 9.7 (population data are based on the 2022 Census).⁵ Figure 2 shows the proportion of adults accessing a disability service across Ireland by county of residence. Sligo (15.7 per 1,000 of the adult population) had the highest proportion, while Dublin (7.7 per 1,000 of the adult population) had the lowest.

5 Central Statistics Office (2023) Census 2023 Summary Results. www.cso.ie

Figure 2 Proportion of adults accessing disability services per 1,000 of the general population aged 18 years and over, by county of residence, NASS 2025

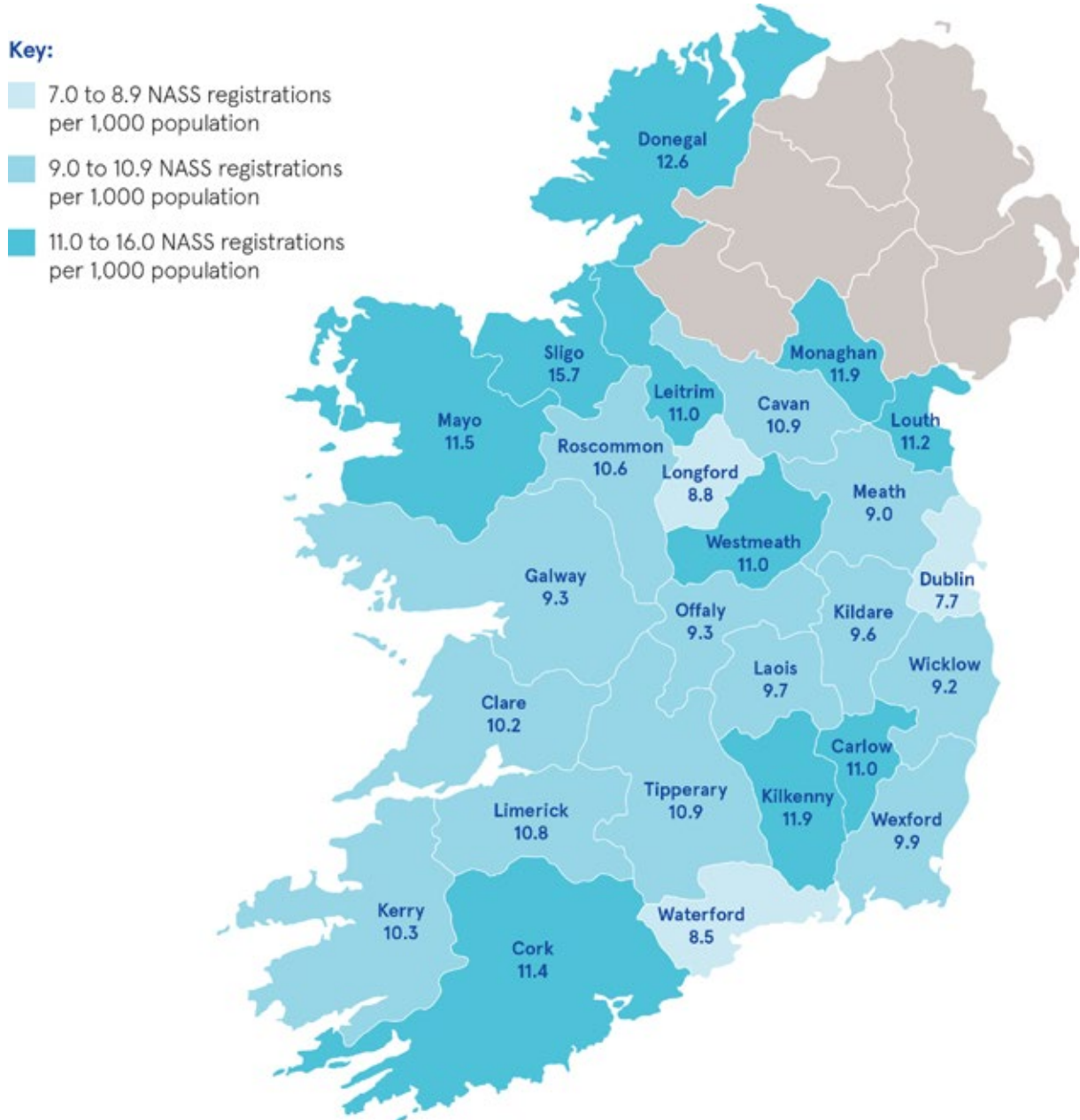
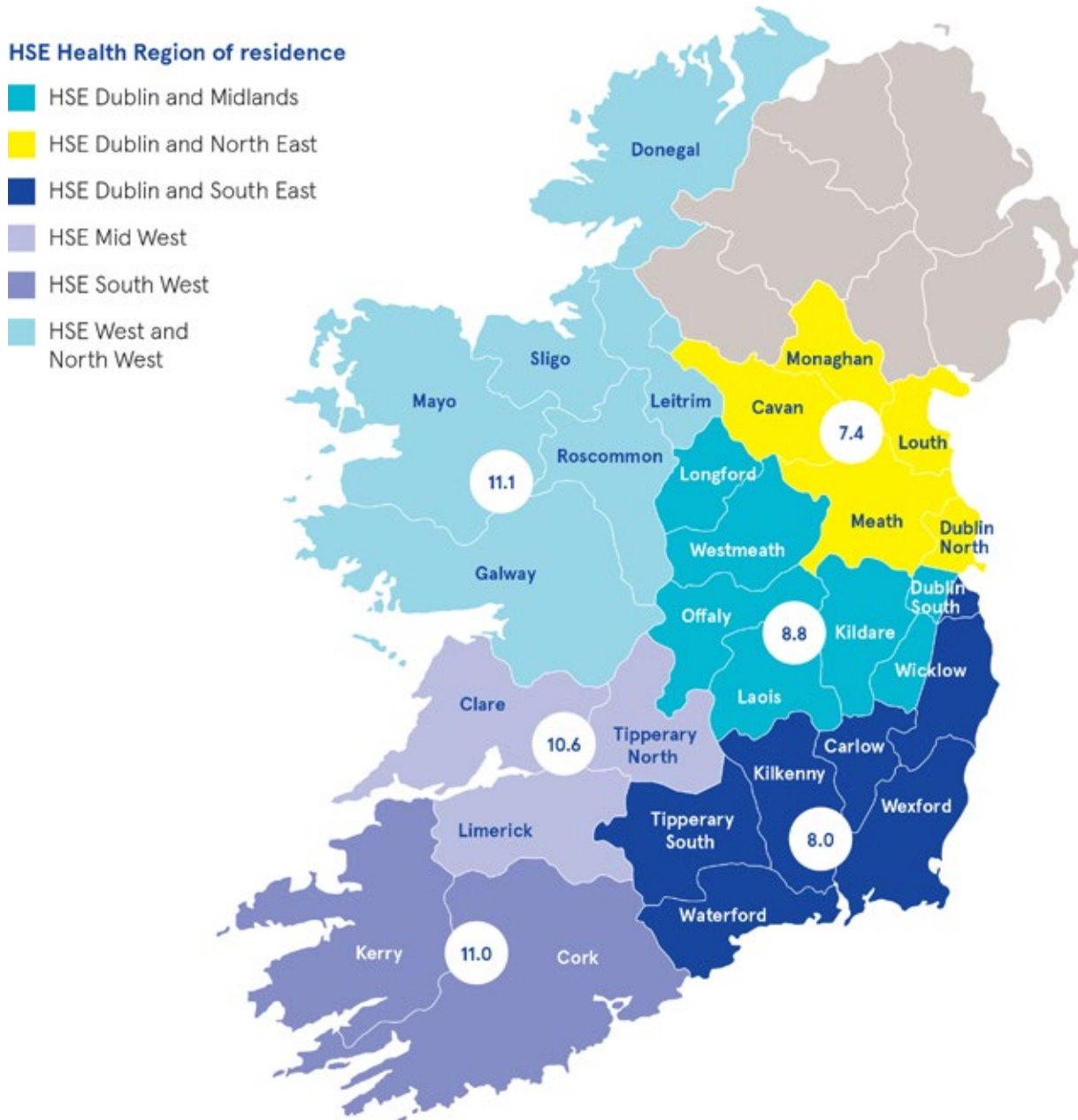


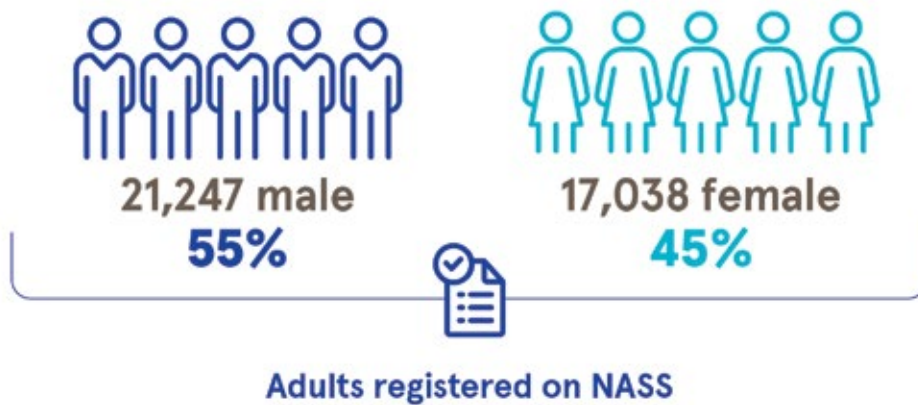
Figure 3 shows the proportion of adults accessing a disability service across Ireland by HSE Health Region of residence. HSE West and North West (11.1 per 1,000 of the adult population) had the highest proportion, while HSE Dublin and North East (7.4 per 1,000 of the adult population) had the lowest.

Figure 3 Proportion of adults accessing disability services per 1,000 of the general population aged 18 years and over, by HSE Health Region of residence, NASS 2025



3.2 Demographic profile

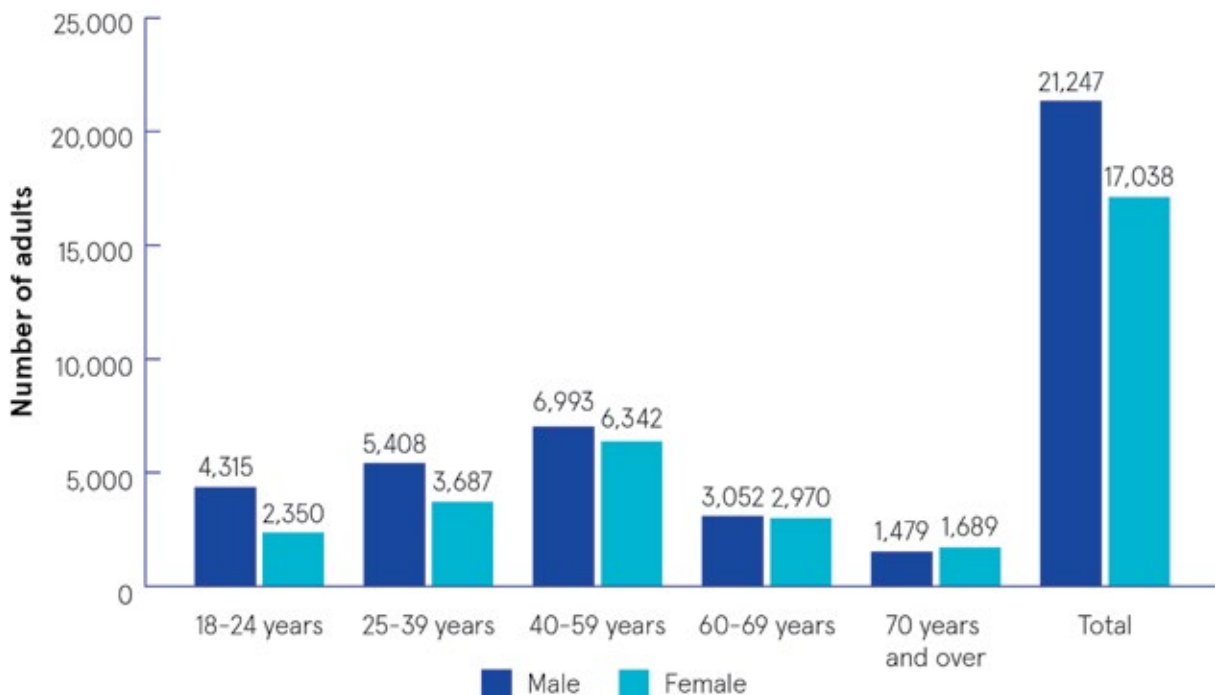
More male (21,247; 55%) than female (17,038; 45%) adults were recorded on NASS as attending a disability service in 2025.



Please note, sex at birth of service user is missing for less than five people

Nearly one-in-five (17%; 6,667) adults were aged 18 – 24 years and more than one-in-three (35%; 13,336) adults were in the 40 – 59 years age group (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Number of adults registered in disability services on NASS by age group and sex, 2025



Please note, sex at birth of service user is missing for less than five people.

3.3 Occupational status

Information on occupational status was available for 87% (33,270) of the 38,288 adults accessing or requiring a disability service in 2025, of whom:

- Over two-fifths (45%; 14,951) were in a training or day programme.
- Over one-in-four (27%; 8,809) were unable to work due to a disability.
- One-tenth (10%; 3,191) were unemployed.
- Nearly one-tenth (9%; 2,922) were in paid employment.
- The remaining 9% were retired (6%; 1,967), students (3%; 976), were engaged in home duties (<1%; 308) or listed 'other' as their occupational status (<1%; 146).

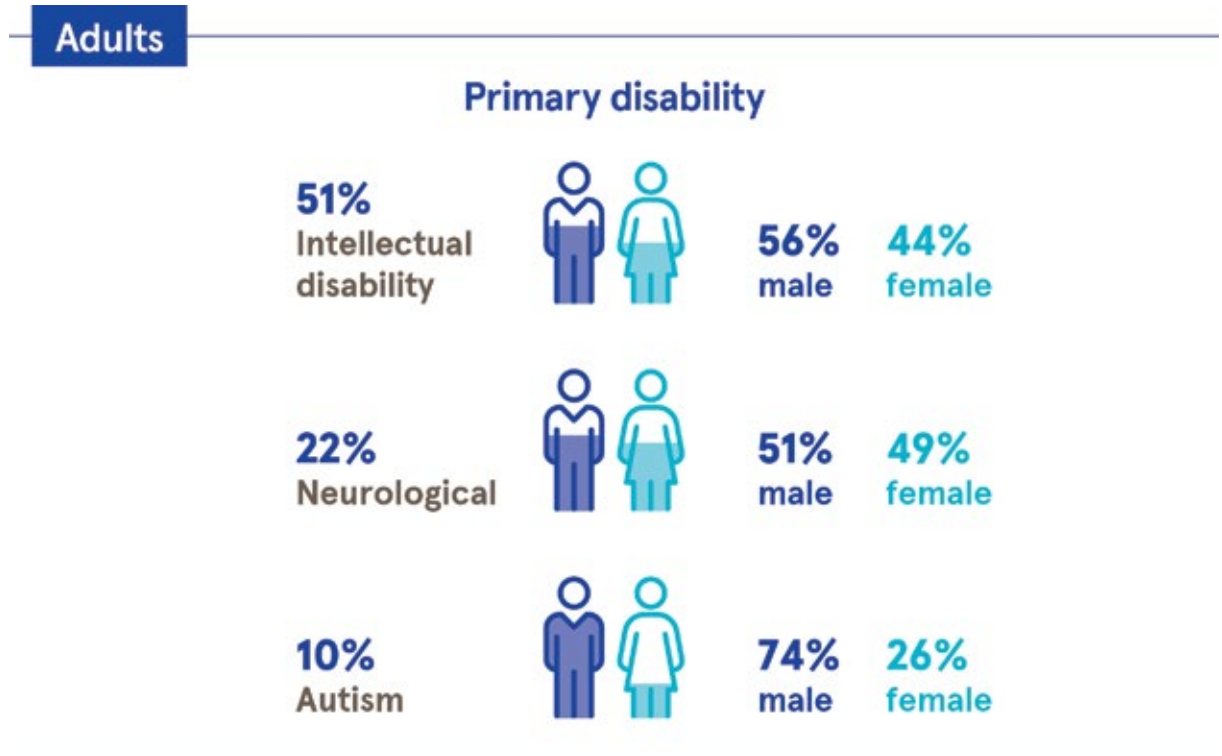
3.4 Living arrangements

Information on living arrangements was available for 91% (34,715) of the 38,288 adults accessing or requiring a disability service in 2025, of whom:

- Over three-fifths (62%; 21,428) were residing with family members.
- One-quarter (25%; 8,539) were living in a residential service setting.
- Over one-tenth (12%; 4,223) were living alone.
- The remaining 1% (525) were living with non-relatives.

3.5 Reported disabilities

The most frequently reported primary disability type was ID (19,490; 51%), followed by neurological disability (8,351; 22%), and autism (3,703; 10%) (Table 3). Of note, among those who have autism reported as a primary disability, over one-in-two are aged 18 – 24 years (2,084; 56%).



Of those with a primary disability of ID, almost two-thirds (64%) had a moderate, severe, or profound ID (Figure 5). Nearly one-in-five adults (18%) with a primary disability of ID were aged 60 years and over; 227 of whom were aged 80 and over.

Figure 5 Degree of ID in adults on NASS whose primary disability was ID, 2025

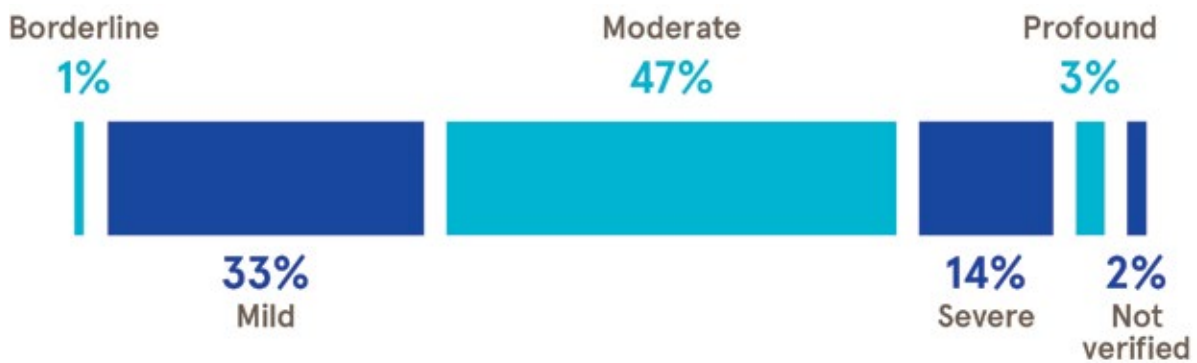


Table 3 Primary disability among adults on NASS by sex, 2025

Primary Disability	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Intellectual	10,947	56.2	8,543	43.8	19,490	50.9
Neurological	4,225	50.6	4,125	49.4	8,351	21.8
Autism	2,753	74.3	950	25.7	3,703	9.7
Physical	1,658	48.9	1,731	51.1	3,389	8.9
Visual	869	48.9	909	51.1	1,778	4.6
Hard of hearing and/or deafness	397	47.6	437	52.4	834	2.2
Mental health	262	56.7	200	43.3	462	1.2
Specific learning difficulty (other than intellectual)	38	48.1	41	51.9	79	0.2
DeafBlind (dual sensory)	28	46.7	32	53.3	60	0.2
Speech and/or language	18	62.1	11	37.9	29	0.1
Not verified*	40	46.5	46	53.5	86	0.2
Total	21,235	55.5	17,025	44.5	38,261	100.0

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

Primary disability type was missing for 27 adults (12 males, 13 females, <5 unknown sex).

3.6 Additional disabilities

More than one-half of adults (55%; 21,164) with any type of primary disability had an additional disability recorded. The most commonly reported additional disability type was physical disability (7,066; 18%), followed by a speech and language disability (3,443; 9%), and autism (2,463; 6%). The breakdown of additional disability types by primary disability is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Additional disabilities among adults on NASS by primary disability, 2025

Additional disability	Primary disability type									
	Intellectual disability		Physical or Sensory*		Autism		Other**		Total population	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total population	19,490	100.0	14,441	100.0	3,703	100.0	627	100.0	38,261	100.0
Physical	3,508	18.0	3,457	23.9	70	1.9	31	4.9	7,066	18.5
Speech and/or Language	3,009	15.4	323	2.2	104	2.8	7	1.1	3,443	9.0
Autism	2,363	12.1	71	0.5	0	0	29	4.6	2,463	6.4
Mental health	1,334	6.8	293	2.0	282	7.6	6	1.0	1,915	5.0
Neurological	1,004	5.2	623	4.3	89	2.4	18	2.9	1,734	4.5
Visual	1,303	6.7	330	2.3	29	0.8	9	1.4	1,671	4.4
Intellectual	0	0	410	2.8	953	25.7	80	12.8	1,443	3.8
Hard of hearing and/or deafness	950	4.9	122	0.8	25	0.7	9	1.4	1,106	2.9
Specific learning difficulty (other than intellectual)	137	0.7	53	0.4	83	2.2	~	~	277	0.7
DeafBlind (dual sensory)	33	0.2	12	0.1	~	~	0	0	46	0.1
No additional disability	5,849	30.0	8,747	60.6	2,067	55.8	434	69.2	17,097	44.7

* Physical or sensory includes DeafBlind (dual sensory), hearing loss and/or deafness, neurological, physical, speech and/or language, and visual.

** Other includes specific learning difficulty (other than intellectual), mental health, and not verified.

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

Note that more than one additional disability may be recorded for a person and, as a result, total percentages may sum up to more than 100%. Note that primary disability type is missing for 27 individuals.

3.7 Primary carer

Of adults (38,288) who do not live in a residential setting (29,727; 78%), nearly three-fifths (58%; 17,129) were reported as having a primary carer; almost all of these individuals live with their primary carer (92%; 15,696).

The majority (73%; 12,463) of primary carers were parents, 12% (2,003) were a wife/husband/partner, and 10% (1,630) were siblings. Age was recorded for more than four-fifths (83%; 14,165) of primary carers, 38% (5,341) of whom were aged 60 years and over. Of the primary carers aged 60 years and over, 3,202 (60%) were aged between 60 – 69 years, 1,623 (30%) were aged between 70 – 79 years and 516 (10%) were aged 80 years and over.

Primary Carer



17,129

people reported having a primary carer



92%

live with their primary carer

Of the primary carers:



73%

parents



12%

wife/husband/partner



10%

sibling



38%

aged 60+ years

4 Services

This section reports on the HSE funded disability services people with disabilities received or require (either currently or within the next five years ⁶), as identified 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 specialised 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.

⁶ Service providers who identify that a service is required must select the year in which it is needed. The options for the year the service is required includes the current year (2025) and the next five years (2026–2030).

4.1 Current service provision

Adults and children



8,340

lived in a residential setting



6,595

received home support



2,255

accessed a personal assistant



1,951

accessed day respite



6,021

availed of overnight respite
151,446 nights

Adults only



20,717

adults accessed day services



24,222

adults received support services

4.1.1 Residential and assisted living services

Residential services and assisted living services include HSE funded disability accommodation and services that provide support to enable people with disabilities to remain in their existing accommodation or to move to more appropriate accommodation.

- A total of 8,340 people were recorded as living in a residential setting.
 - Of these, 8,094 were adults and 246 were children.
 - A residential house in the community (6,399; 77%) was the most common type of residential setting followed by people living in campus based accommodation (1,606; 19%).

- One-fifth (20%; 1,647) of current residential places accessed require an enhancement.
- Eighty-six percent (7,167) of people living in a residential setting had an ID, of whom 81% (5,785) had either a moderate, severe, or profound ID.
- A total of 57 people were availing of a Home Sharing placement.

Assisted living services include services reported on NASS as either home support or personal assistant (PA). Home support allows a person to live independently and actively participate in society. It includes general home support, home care assistant service, and home help.

Personal assistance⁷ is a person-directed / user-led, human delivered support available to a disabled person. A PA is chosen and directed by the disabled person to provide person-to-person assistance for a range of daily activities, both inside and outside the home. This remains at the discretion and direction of the individual, thus promoting choice and control to empower the disabled person to live a life of self-determination. The disabled person may devolve administrative functions for their PA to a service provider.

- A total of 8,613 people were in receipt of 8,850 assisted living services. Assisted living services include services captured on NASS as home support, or PA.
 - Of these, 7,089 were adults and 1,524 were children.
 - Over four-in-ten (43%; 3,841) of those who received assisted living services were aged between 19 – 54 years.
 - Of the 8,850 assisted living services:
 - 6,595 were home support, and
 - 2,255 were PA services.
 - More than one-tenth (13%; 1,137) of assisted living services require an enhancement.
 - Over one-half (54%; 4,588) of those who received assisted living services had a primary disability of physical or sensory, and 35% (2,984) had an ID.
 - Nearly seven-in-ten (69%; 5,519) people in receipt of assisted living services were living with family, and over one-quarter (26%; 2,073) were living alone.

⁷ Preliminary definition of personal assistance from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality PA working group – March, 2026.

4.1.2 Day services

HSE funded disability day services captured on NASS are accessed by those aged 18 years and over and include New Directions day programme, rehabilitative training, and day programmes accessed in a person's residential house.

The following outlines 2025 data for day service provision:

- Service providers reported 20,717 (54%) adults accessed either a day programme, and/or rehabilitative training.
 - A day programme was the most commonly accessed (19,390; 91%) type of day service.
 - An enhancement is required for 3,267 (17%) day programme places.
 - Rehabilitative training was received by 1,833 people.

The breakdown of day services by primary disability type is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Day services accessed by adults on NASS by primary disability type, 2025

	Intellectual disability		Physical or Sensory*		Autism		Other**		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total population	19,490	100.0	14,441	100.0	3,703	100.0	627	100.0	38,261	100.0
Day programme [†]	15,197	78.0	2,130	14.7	1,737	46.9	325	51.8	19,389	50.7
Rehabilitative training	964	4.9	304	2.1	421	11.4	143	22.8	1,832	4.8
Total	15,771	80.9	2,359	16.3	2,121	57.3	464	74.0	20,715	54.1

[†] A day programme aims to provide a supportive environment which addresses a person's needs. These day programmes provide, or are moving towards providing, the 12 supports outlined in the New Directions Model.⁸

* Physical or sensory includes DeafBlind (dual sensory), hearing loss and/or deafness, neurological, physical, speech and/or language, and visual.

** Other includes specific learning difficulty (other than intellectual), mental health, and not verified.

Note: Primary disability type is missing for 27 adults.

8 New Directions: review of HSE day services and implementation plan 2012-2016: personal support services for adults with disabilities. Naas: Health Service Executive, 2012. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/newdirections/new%20directions%20report.pdf>

4.1.3 Day respite

Day respite consists of short-term care in the local community. It may be provided in a centre-based facility, or through a home sharing arrangement.

The following outlines 2025 data for day respite services:

- A total of 1,951 people accessed 1,986 day respite places in 2025.
 - Of these, 746 were adults and 1,205 were children.
 - Of the day respite places provided in 2025, 1,622 were centre-based respite places, and 364 were home sharing places.
 - Fourteen percent (287) of day respite places accessed in 2025 require an enhancement.

4.1.4 Overnight respite

Overnight respite care may involve providing alternative family or residential care for a person with a disability to enable their carer to take a short break, a holiday, or a rest while providing a positive experience for the service user. It includes short-term respite (such as a weekend) and longer respite arrangements (for example, to cover a holiday or hospital stay for the primary carer).

The number of overnight respite nights are shown as 'median'. The median is the value at the mid-point in a sequence of numerical values ranged in ascending or descending order. It is defined as the value above or below which half of the values lie. Unlike the mean (average), the median is not influenced by extreme values (or outliers).

The following outlines 2025 data for overnight respite services:

- There were 6,021 people who availed of 6,225 overnight respite places in 2025.
 - Of these, 4,599 were adults and 1,422 were children.
 - Respite in a house in the community or a dedicated respite centre (5,414) was the most commonly accessed type of overnight respite, followed by holiday respite in a hotel, B&B or hostel (296), and holiday respite in a residential centre or summer camp (249).
 - A total of 151,446 nights were accessed, with individuals accessing a median of 17 nights (Range 1–365 nights) (16 nights (Range 1–365 nights) for adults, 21 nights (Range 1–322 nights) for children) during 2025.
 - Overall, 21 people received 260 or more nights of overnight respite during 2025.
 - Of those, 11 received 365 nights of overnight respite.
 - One-fifth (20%; 1,217) of overnight respite places accessed in 2025 require an enhancement.

4.1.5 Support services

Multidisciplinary and specialised support services which aim to develop or restore a person's capabilities are outlined in this section. Due to the differences in the availability of information for children and adults in relation to these service types, the service use of the two groups is described separately below.

Children

- There were 61,570 children in contact with a CDNT in 2025. This includes children whose referral assessment is underway, are on a CDNT waiting list, currently receiving services from a CDNT and children who have been discharged from a CDNT in 2025. It is estimated that 20% of the information provided to NASS from the CDNTIMS related to children who were referred to and awaiting assessment by a CDNT, or who were discharged from a CDNT in 2025.
- Children with neurological, physical or sensory disabilities may receive specialised support services from dedicated organisations which engage with their service users independently of the CDNTs. Service providers reported 1,162 children accessed the services of a case manager. The most commonly received specialised support services were occupational therapy (793), physiotherapy (791), and vision rehabilitation (786).

Adults

- Nearly two-thirds (63%; 24,222) of adults received at least one support service from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service in 2025.
 - A total of 12,645 (65%) adults with an ID received one or more support services. The most commonly accessed support services were social work (5,312), speech and language therapy (4,329), and nursing (4,060) (Figure 6).
 - Sixty-nine percent (9,896) of adults with a physical or sensory disability received one or more support services. A key worker was accessed by 3,142 people. The most commonly accessed support services were peer support (2,329), vision rehabilitation (1,536), and physiotherapy (1,190) (Figure 7).
 - Forty-four percent (1,611) of autistic adults received one or more support services. A key worker was accessed by 1,093 people. The most commonly accessed support services were social work (189), clinical psychology (187) and behavioural therapy (177).

Figure 6 Most commonly received support services for adults on NASS with a primary disability of ID (places currently being accessed and enhancements required to current places), 2025

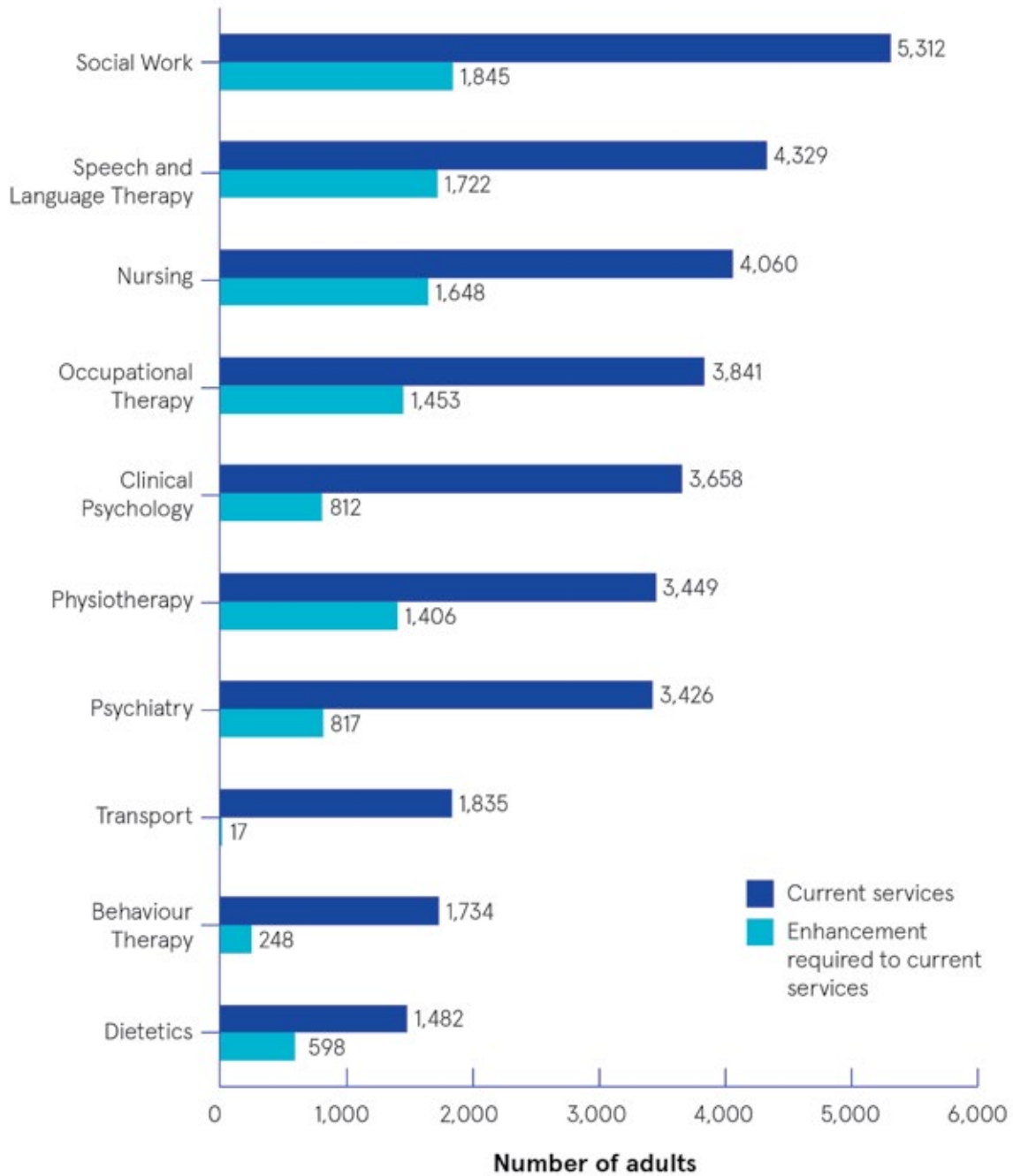
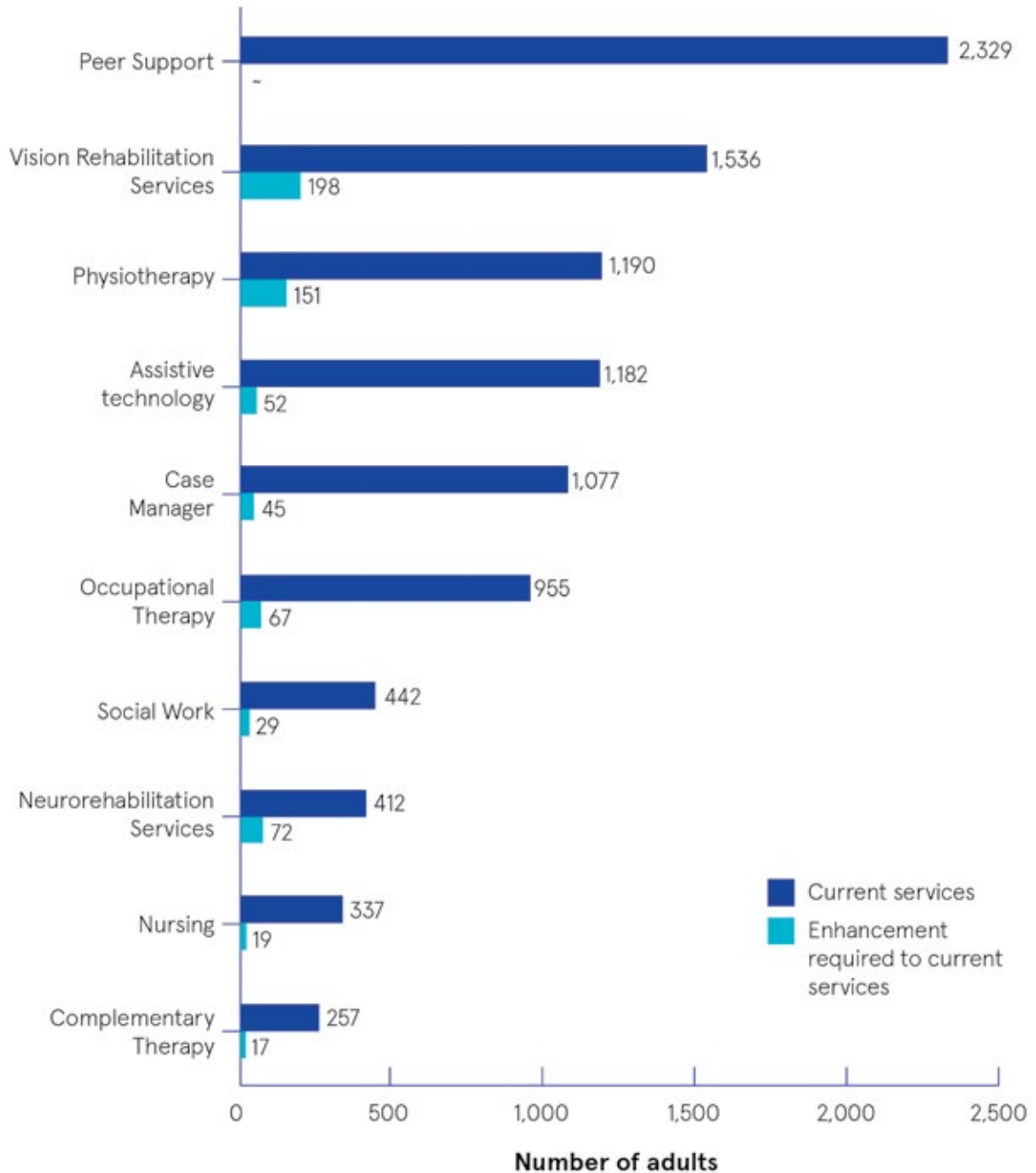


Figure 7 Most commonly received support services for adults on NASS with a primary disability of a physical or sensory disability (places currently being accessed and enhancements required to current places), 2025



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

4.2 New services required for 2025–2030

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.

Services are identified as required by a service provider. Due to the ongoing roll out of the CDNTIMS in 2025, information on specialised support services for children is incomplete therefore, data on support services are only presented for adults.

Adults and children



2,197
residential
places
required



706
home
support places
required



200
personal
assistant
services
required



1,462
people
require
overnight
respite



2,365
people
require a
day service
in 2026*

* information provided by the HSE National Day Service Database

Adults only



4,669
adults require
support services

Main support services required:



Occupational
Therapy



Physiotherapy



Speech and
Language Therapy



Clinical
psychology

4.2.1 Residential and assisted living requirements

The following outlines 2025 data for residential and assisted living requirements:

- A total of 2,197 people were identified by service providers as requiring a residential service.
 - Of these, 2,163 were adults and 34 were children.
 - Nearly three-fifths (56%; 1,238) of those in need of residential services were aged 35 years and over.
 - Ninety-seven percent (2,124) of residential services required are for a place in a house in the community.
 - Nearly three-in-four residential services required are needed immediately i.e. required in 2025 (72%; 1,590).
 - Eighty-six percent (1,888) of people in need of residential services have an ID, 74% (1,405) of whom have a moderate, severe, or profound ID.
 - More than four-in-five adults requiring a residential service (82%; 1,794) have a primary carer; of those primary carers, almost one-half (46%; 824) are aged 60 years and over.

- Service providers identified 877 people as requiring 906 assisted living services.
 - Of these, 751 were adults and 126 were children.
 - Sixty percent (531) were aged 35 years and over, one-in-four people (26%; 226) were aged 18 – 34 years, and 14% (120) were aged under 18 years.
 - Of the 906 assisted living services required:
 - 706 were identified as home support, and
 - 200 were identified as PA services.
 - More than one-half of people (53%; 461) have an ID and 29% (251) have a physical or sensory disability.
 - Of those with an ID, 398 of the assisted living services required are for home support, and 86 are for a PA. Twenty three people require both a PA and home support.
 - Of those with a physical or sensory disability, 156 of the assisted living services required are for home support, and 99 are for a PA. Four people require both PA and home support

4.2.2 Day service requirements

Information on referrals for day services required in 2026 was provided for this bulletin by the HSE National Day Service Database (NDSDB).

- 2,365 were identified as requiring an Adult Day Service, and
- 1,000 were identified as requiring Rehabilitative Training.

As referrals continue throughout the year the final number of people that require day services in 2026 was not available at the time of publication.

Table 6 Day Services required in 2026 by Health Region, HSE National Day Service Database

Health Region	Day Service	Rehabilitative Training
Dublin and North East	432	216
Dublin and Midlands	400	173
Dublin and South East	460	192
South West	516	188
Mid West	213	68
West and North West	344	163
Total	2,365	1,000

* As referrals continue throughout the year the final number of people that require day services in 2026 was not available at the time of publication.

4.2.3 Day respite requirements

In 2025, service providers reported the following day respite services were required:

- Overall, 222 people require a day respite service.
 - Of these, 169 were adults and 53 were children.
 - Centre-based respite (including clubs and camps) is the most commonly required day respite service (163 places).

4.2.4 Overnight respite requirements

In 2025, service providers reported the following overnight respite services were required:

- Overall, 1,462 people require overnight respite.
 - Of these, 1,289 were adults and 173 were children.
 - Overnight respite in a house in the community or dedicated respite centre is the most commonly required (976), followed by holiday respite in a hotel or bed and breakfast (245), and holiday respite in a residential centre or summer camp (197).
 - Over three-quarters (77%;1,121) of those who require overnight respite services have an ID, 11% (165) have a physical or sensory disability, and 10% (151) are Autistic.

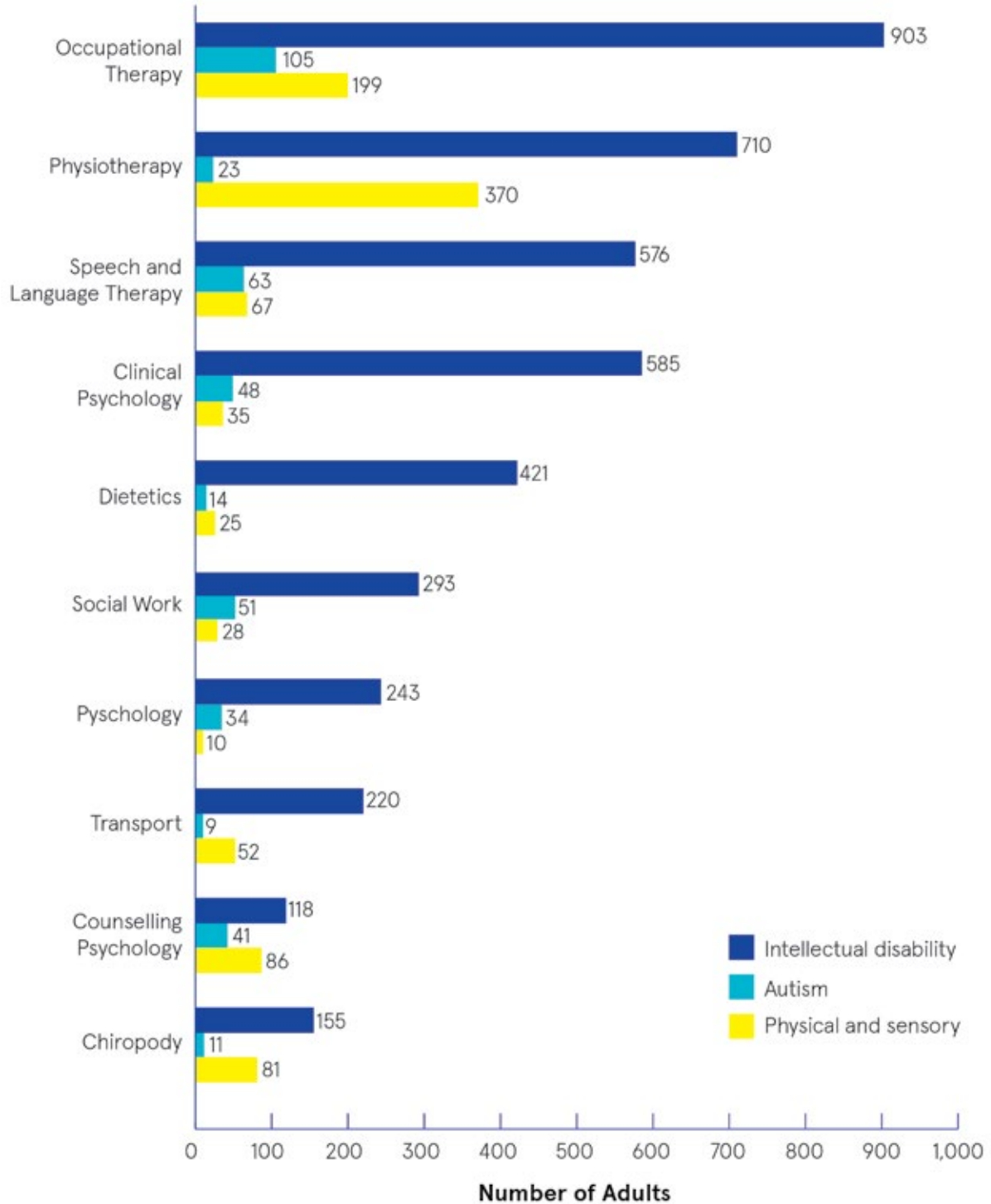
4.2.5 Support service requirements (adults only)

In 2025, service providers reported the following support services were required for adults only:

- Over one-tenth (12%; 4,669) of adults require at least one support service from either a multidisciplinary team or a specialised disability service.
 - The support services most commonly required are occupational therapy (1,209), physiotherapy (1,103), speech and language therapy (710), and clinical psychology (673).

See Figure 8 for the breakdown of support services required for those with a primary disability of ID, autism or a physical or sensory disability.

Figure 8 Most commonly required support services for adults on NASS with a primary disability of ID, autism, or physical or sensory disability, 2025



Physical or sensory includes DeafBlind (dual sensory), hearing loss and/or deafness, neurological, physical, speech and/or language and visual.

5 Publications and analysis

This bulletin provides a national overview of data from NASS. Supplementary infographics presenting information by Health Region (HR) are also available on the HRB website at <https://www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/disability-service-use-and-need/>.

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/about-disability-service-use-and-need-data/> to access a data request form and return it to nass@hrb.ie.

Acknowledgements



The authors wish to acknowledge the continuing commitment and cooperation of the following groups which are involved in the ongoing maintenance of the National Ability Supports System (NASS):

- The NASS Committee
- The National Health Information Systems Unit of the Health Research Board (HRB), in particular Mary O’Gorman, Suzi Lyons, and Sarah Craig
- The Disability Division of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality
- The Health Service Executive (HSE), in particular the NASS personnel and National Disability Operations Team
- Angela Moran, HSE National Day Service Database, for providing data for this bulletin on the number of day services that are required
- Colm Moroney, HSE National Disability Specialist - ICT Lead, Disability Services, Access and Integration for facilitating receipt of data from the CDNTIMS
- Service providers
- The representative bodies for the providers of services to people with disabilities, specifically the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, and the Disability Federation of Ireland, and
- The parents and families of people with a disability and their representative bodies, as well as all service users throughout Ireland.



An Bord Taighde Sláinte
Teach Grattan

67-72 Sráid an Mhóta Íochtarach
Baile Átha Cliath 2
D02 H638
Éire

Health Research Board
Grattan House
67-72 Lower Mount Street
Dublin 2
D02 H638
Ireland

t +353 1 234 5000
e hrb@hrb.ie
w www.hrb.ie