



Summary of key asks for Budget 2025

- Sustainable funding for national physiotherapy services for people with Multiple Sclerosis, and other neurological conditions totalling €880,000 per annum or €94,000 per CHO
- An increase of €627,000 in annual investment in the National MS Respite Centre

Sustainable funding for national physiotherapy services for people with Multiple Sclerosis, and other neurological conditions

MS Ireland is seeking funding from the 2025 National Service Plan for a programme to directly employ a Senior Physiotherapist in each HSE CHO area to enable 1,458 people living with Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological conditions to receive group physiotherapy programmes and to deliver 3,726 individual appointments per annum. The funding of this programme would provide much needed specialist services at a local level and address many of the issues associated with insufficient access to local primary care due to long waiting lists. The programme will cost €880,000 per annum to run nationally or €94,000 per CHO and will support the HSE in reducing the burden on primary care waiting lists, avoid A&E and OPD pinch points and prevent disability and comorbidities.

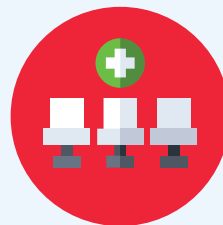
Extensive research has shown the effectiveness of this service in reducing symptom severity, disability, falls and healthcare utilisation.

MS Ireland has consistently demonstrated the organisational capacity to run these programmes on budget, on time and exceeding output and outcomes targets and has the appropriate clinical and organisational governance systems in place. This specialist physiotherapy team will leverage the extensive experience, knowledge, systems and governance that are already in place and ready to expand.

Taking part in MS Ireland designed physiotherapy programmes has been shown to result in:



Reduction in usage of healthcare services by **43.1%**



A&E and inpatient services utilisation reduced by **33%** and **57.4%** reduction in bed days



Significant improvements in quality of life (**20.2%**), fatigue (**16%**) and mental health (**20%**)



Our data suggests that we can **reduce the number of people falling***, and the number of falls they have through our programmes by **49%**

*People with MS, Stroke and Parkinsons (PD) fall at a similar rate to the over 85's (50% in a three month period).

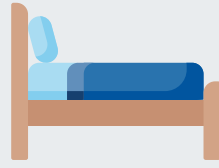


Delaying and reducing disability due to MS could reduce costs to the Irish health system annually by up to €19m.

Benefits of a state of the art, modern, community based respite facility



A break for people living with MS and their caregivers



Relieves pressure on already inadequate number of respite beds



Helps to preserve the wellbeing of residents and thus reduces the societal costs of caring for them

Increase in annual statutory investment in the National MS Respite Centre by €627,000

MS Ireland is seeking €627,000 in additional funding to see the National MS Respite Centre, a 12 bedded unit which provides respite care to people living with Multiple Sclerosis and other progressive neurological conditions, expand its opening to 350 days per annum, providing an additional 1,248 bed nights annually. At present, the National MS Respite Centre is only open for 40 weeks per year as a result of decreases in both statutory and fundraised income over the last number of years.

The National MS Respite Centre plays a crucial role in ensuring family carers are supported and delivers a range of therapeutic services, neurological assessments and many social activities, all designed to prevent crisis and keep people living with neurological conditions well at home.

The National MS Respite Centre is HIQA accredited and fully equipped to meet the needs of people living with Multiple Sclerosis and offers a homely environment in which people living with Multiple Sclerosis can interact with each other, engage in activities, and be cared for in a comfortable and safe environment. MS Ireland believes that all people who require respite care in the National MS Respite Centre should have access to it. In order to deliver this to our community members, additional annual statutory funding is essential.

To restore the National MS Respite Centre to operating 350 days, providing an additional 1,248 bed nights per year, we require an increase in funding of €627,000 per annum.

Caregivers spend an increasing number of hours each week providing care

Of these caregivers:



64% are emotionally drained



32% experience depression



22% have lost a job due to caregiving responsibilities

This funding will provide high quality respite care, from experienced neurological nurses and healthcare staff. Increased respite availability will not only benefit those using our service and their families, but it also assists the HSE in alleviating pressure on an already inadequate number of respite beds.

MS Ireland also echoes the asks of the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI), the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and Family Carers Ireland.



The Irish State is estimated to save €20 billion on an annual basis due to the 500,000 family carers that provide unpaid care each day to those living with disability or illness.