

## **ILMI Personal Assistance Services Campaign**

### **What is the personal assistance service?**

The Personal Assistance Service (PAS) is a tool that allows us to live independently. The PAS enables us to do all the tasks that we cannot do for ourselves. It provides us with the freedom and flexibility we need to live our lives as we chose. A Personal Assistant (PA) is hired to assist us with a range of day-to-day tasks that we cannot physically do for ourselves.

With PAS we are in control and direct the PA to carry out tasks both inside and outside of the home, including personal care, domestic duties, assisting in day-to-day tasks such as shopping, support in the workplace or socialising. A PA does not “look after” or “care for” us. We delegate these tasks to our PAs and in doing so take back control of our lives.

A distinct benefit of PAS is that it reduces our dependence on our family and friends. The confidential relationship that develops between our PAs and us allows us to maintain a private life and our dignity. The PAS is often the difference between existing and living for many of us.

### **What is currently provided?**

According to information submitted by the HSE to the Committee on Public Petitions in 2017, 1.51 million service hours were delivered to 2,470 people. However, these figures show that 84.44% of us who received a PAS received less than three hours per day on average, with 44.41% of us in receipt of an average of 42 minutes per day. It is clear that anyone who receives an average of 42 minutes per day is not going to be able to live independently, access education or employment or become involved in meaningful social engagement. Disabled people with reduced services of this nature will become trapped in our own homes without the chance to interact and will be prone to isolation and depression.

Through a nationwide consultation with our members it is clear that some service providers are moving away from the original model started by the Center for Independent Living in 1992, which was based on us directing our PAS to enable us to live full, independent lives. Many feel the PAS is moving towards a system focused on compliance, regulation and bureaucracy.

### **What WE in the Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) want for our Personal Assistance Service!**

**Define:** A universal accepted definition of the Personal Assistance Service, which places us at the centre of any service provided and is directed by us to meet our needs to live independent lives. The PAS is about providing us with the necessary supports, both inside and outside of our homes to enable us to live a life of choice, dignity and respect. The Personal Assistance Service needs to be separated from Home Help and Home Care with its own ring-fenced budget.

**Legislate:** Introduce legislation to guarantee us the right to a Personal Assistance Service as per Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

**Invest:** Increase the budget for Personal Assistance Services by €12.5 million annually to provide an additional 500,000 hours each year to enable us to lead real independent lives.

**Standardise:** Introduce a single standard assessment of need across all HSE CHO areas. This must include the provision and support for independent assessment of need as per the Disability Act 2005 and the creation of systems that allow for portability of services across CHO areas, meeting our social, personal and employment needs with no bureaucratic barriers.

**Promote:** Ensure that we are all made aware of the availability of the Personal Assistance Service in order that those who wish to lead to live their lives independently can access the necessary supports to do so.

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