



**INVEST IN  
NEUROLOGY  
CAMPAIGN**

**800,000 Irish people are living with neurological conditions such as migraine, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, stroke, Parkinson's disease and rare and genetic conditions.**



**A nationwide audit of neurology services published in 2016 showed critical gaps in neurology services and staffing across Ireland, including:**

- Recommended ratio is one consultant neurologist per 70,000 population, this was exceeded within every hospital group and in one hospital group (Mid West) ratio is 1:200,000.
- Less than two thirds of the minimum recommended number of dedicated inpatient neurology beds available to support the service nationwide.
- Number of specialist nurses is significantly below what is recommended for our population with less than half the number of MS nurses and less than a third for Parkinson's disease.

*(recommendations British Assoc Neurologists)*

**People can wait up to 2 years to see a neurologist. We have 34 neurologists for our population, we should have a minimum of 72.**

**The first patient experience survey of over 200 service users of outpatient neurology services, carried out in 2017, found that:**

- Over one third of patients who responded were concerned at the length of time until their next appointment.
- Over one fifth of respondents reported waiting more than 6 months between the time they were referred by their GP and when they saw a neurologist for the first time with one in ten respondents waiting more than 12 months.



## The Experience of Service Users (NAI Neurology Patient Experience Survey 2017)

“My neurologist’s hands are tied when requesting tests, e.g. MRI, waiting lists are horrific.”

“I worry that waiting times for appointments, MRI’s and other tests are taking much longer, significantly so. The neurologists are frustrated with this too but they continue to provide fantastic care despite increased pressure.”

“Shortage of staff is a serious problem, as a patient of 20 years, it has got much worse.”

“Staff are excellent but they can’t give their all as they are totally understaffed.”

## Failure to invest in neurology services has led to:



- Long waiting times for first outpatient appointment to see a neurologist (NTPF figures showed that over 19,000 people were waiting for a first appointment in December 2017, over 6,000 were waiting more than 12 months and over 3,500 waiting more than 18 months), even though early diagnosis and treatment is essential for neurological conditions.
- Long waiting times between appointments and lack of access to specialist nurse and health and social care professionals.
- Increased pressure on other areas of the health and social care system such as home care services, personal assistance services and rehabilitation services due to preventable deterioration in neurological conditions that are not being properly monitored and managed.

## The Invest in Neurology campaign is calling for Government commitment for:

- Immediate investment to address critical deficits in neurology staffing, including neurologists, specialist nurses and health and social care professionals to recommended levels.
- Targeted long term investment in neurology services to support implementation of the Neurology & Epilepsy Models of Care.
- Dedicated resources to support the development of clinical pathways for headache, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease and rare and genetic neurological conditions.

## The Invest in Neurology Campaign is supported by:



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