



Midlands Patients Facing Long Journeys for Specialist Care NAI Calls for Budget Investment in Neurology Services

Wednesday, 24th June 2026 — The Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) is calling on the Government to make targeted investments in neurology and neurorehabilitation services in Budget 2027 to address growing waiting lists, regional inequalities and gaps in specialist care affecting the more than 860,000 people living with neurological conditions across Ireland (one in six of the population).

In its Pre-Budget Submission 2027, *The Right Care in the Right Place*, the NAI is seeking investment of €2.2m to strengthen neurology services nationwide and to deliver a long-promised community neurorehabilitation team for the South East, the only region in Ireland that has yet to receive funding for such a service.

The call comes just months after the publication of NAI's landmark report, *Towards an Equitable Integrated Neurology Service for Ireland*, which highlighted significant shortcomings in neurology services ten years after the National Model of Care for Neurology was published.

The report, supported by Sanofi, found that demand for neurology services continues to grow rapidly, with neurology waiting lists doubling over the past decade to more than 24,000¹ people nationwide. It also highlighted significant regional disparities in access to specialist neurological care.

For patients living in the Midlands, these disparities are particularly evident. The 2016 Model of Care for Neurology Services recommended that all Model 3 hospitals should have access to dedicated neurology services. However, both Midlands Regional Hospital Mullingar and Midlands Regional Hospital Tullamore continue to have only very limited outreach neurology provision.

As a result, many people living with neurological conditions across counties Offaly, Westmeath, Laois and Longford must travel regularly to Dublin to access specialist appointments, diagnosis and ongoing care. NAI's research found that long travel distances, delays in accessing services, and gaps in local specialist support continue to have a significant impact on patients and families, placing additional financial, practical, and emotional burdens on those already managing complex neurological conditions.

Investment Needed to Deliver Timely Access to Specialist Care

The NAI is calling for dedicated investment in Budget 2027 to support the continued rollout of sustainable neurology services in regional hospitals and to strengthen specialist pathways that enable timely diagnosis and access to appropriate care.

Magdalen Rogers, Chief Executive of the Neurological Alliance of Ireland, said:

“People living with neurological conditions in the Midlands should not have to travel to Dublin simply to access specialist neurological care. Yet for many patients and families across Offaly, Westmeath, Laois and Longford, lengthy journeys have become a routine part of managing their condition.



Our research highlights the very real impact of regional inequalities in access to care. Budget 2027 presents an opportunity to strengthen neurology services in regional hospitals and reduce the burden on patients who are currently travelling long distances for appointments that should be available closer to home. Everyone deserves access to the right care in the right place, regardless of their postcode.”

Regional Gaps in Neurorehabilitation

The NAI is also calling on the Government to complete the national rollout of community neurorehabilitation teams. Community neurorehabilitation teams provide access to specialist therapies and support for people living with neurological conditions in their local communities, helping them maximise independence, prevent avoidable deterioration, and reduce pressure on acute hospital services.

The organisation says investment in community neurorehabilitation teams would address major regional inequities while helping to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharges.

Orla Hardiman, Professor of Neurology and Head of the Academic Unit of Neurology at Trinity College Dublin and Consultant Neurologist at Beaumont Hospital, said:

“Neurological conditions are among the leading causes of disability and complex healthcare needs worldwide. We know that early intervention, multidisciplinary care, and access to rehabilitation services can significantly improve patient outcomes.

The evidence is clear that demand for neurology services in Ireland is increasing rapidly. Investment in specialist neurology services and community neurorehabilitation is essential if we are to deliver equitable, effective and sustainable care. These investments will not only improve patient outcomes but will also help reduce longer-term pressures on the health system.”

NAI Pre-Budget 2027 Priorities

The Neurological Alliance of Ireland is calling on the Government to:

- Invest in sustainable neurology services in regional hospitals and nationally to improve access to specialist care and timely diagnosis.
- Continue the rollout of neurology services to address regional inequities in access.
- Invest in specialist pathways for neurological conditions.
- Fund a community neurorehabilitation team for the South East and complete the national rollout of neurorehabilitation services.
- Strengthen access to rehabilitation and community supports for people living with neurological conditions.

With 50,000 new neurological diagnoses each year and demand for services continuing to grow, the NAI is urging the Government to make neurology and neurorehabilitation a priority in Budget 2027.



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Notes to Editor:

About Neurological Alliance of Ireland:

The Neurological Alliance of Ireland brings together 40 non-profit organisations to advocate for the rights of the over 860,000 people throughout Ireland living with a neurological condition. Neurological conditions affect the brain and spinal cord and now represent the leading cause of disability worldwide. Founded in 2003, the NAI advocates for the development of quality services for people living with neurological conditions. Our campaigns are rooted in the experiences of our members and the individuals and families they work with. We provide a united and expert voice on neurological care through advocacy, policy development, and awareness-raising. More information can be found at www.nai.ie.

References

1. Source: Outpatient Waiting Lists by Speciality www.ntpf.ie
2. Source: NAI The Right Care in The Right Place report https://www.nai.ie/sites/www.nai.ie/files/universal_attached_files/Survey%20Report%202025.pdf