



## South East Still Waiting: NAI Calls for Budget 2027 Funding for Region's Long-Promised Neurorehabilitation Team

**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 critical shortcomings in neurology services a decade after the National Model of Care for Neurology was published.

The report, which was 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 24,000<sup>1</sup>. It also highlighted significant regional inequities in access to specialist services, with several Model 3 hospitals still lacking dedicated neurology services despite recommendations that such services should be available in all Model 3 hospitals.

For people living across the South East, access to both neurology and neurorehabilitation services remains a significant challenge. The South East, covering the HSE Integrated Healthcare Areas of Waterford/Wexford and Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, is the only region in Ireland that has yet to receive funding for a community neurorehabilitation team, despite a commitment in the Programme for Government to complete the nationwide rollout of these services.

The region also continues to face gaps in access to specialist neurology care. The 2016 Model of Care for Neurology Services recommended that all Model 3 hospitals should have a dedicated neurology service. However, Tipperary University Hospital remains the only Model 3 hospital in the South East without a dedicated neurology service.

As a result, many people living with neurological conditions across the region continue to face long journeys to access specialist care and rehabilitation services. In contrast, others experience delays and gaps in support closer to home. NAI's research found that these disparities have a significant impact on patients and families, affecting access to timely diagnosis, treatment and ongoing care.



## **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:**

*“The South East is now the only region in Ireland without a funded community neurorehabilitation team, despite repeated commitments to complete the national rollout of these services. This means that people living with neurological conditions in counties Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Tipperary do not have the same access to specialist rehabilitation supports as people elsewhere in the country.*

*At the same time, gaps in access to neurology services remain across the region, with many patients continuing to travel long distances for specialist care. Budget 2027 is an opportunity to address these longstanding inequalities and ensure that people in the South East can access the care and rehabilitation they need closer to home.”*

## **South East Needs Neurorehabilitation Investment**

The NAI is calling on the Government to complete the national rollout of community neurorehabilitation teams by funding a dedicated team for the South East.

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.

A national survey conducted by the NAI in 2025 involving more than 600 people living with neurological conditions found that 73%<sup>2</sup> of respondents in the South East reported being unable to access neurorehabilitation services in their community.

The organisation says investment in a South East community neurorehabilitation team would address a major regional inequity 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.

### ENDS

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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](http://www.nai.ie).

#### References

1. Source: Outpatient Waiting Lists by Speciality [www.ntpf.ie](http://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](https://www.nai.ie/sites/www.nai.ie/files/universal_attached_files/Survey%20Report%202025.pdf)

