

Chair of Oireachtas Cross Party Group on Neurological Conditions Deputy Colm Burke

Statement of Response to Neurological Alliance of Ireland Report

“Towards an Equitable Integrated Neurology Service for Ireland”

22nd April 2026

The findings outlined in the latest report from the Cross-Party Special Interest Group on Neurological Conditions and the Neurological Alliance of Ireland highlight an urgent and deeply concerning picture of neurology services across Ireland.

Ten years on from the publication of the Model of Care for Neurology Services in 2016, it is clear that many of its core commitments have not yet been fully realised. The aim of equitable access to high-quality, responsive neurological care remains unmet for many patients, with significant regional disparities, long waiting times, and major staffing shortages continuing to impact individuals and families across the country.

With one in six people in Ireland now living with a neurological condition and more than 24,000 people currently waiting for outpatient neurology appointments, the scale of unmet need is substantial. Reports of individuals travelling long distances for care, waiting years for access to adult services, and experiencing gaps in rehabilitation and specialist supports are deeply troubling and underscore the human impact of under-resourced services.

The reported shortages in multidisciplinary staffing, including physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, neuropsychology, dietetics and neurorehabilitation services, represent a systemic gap that must be addressed. The finding that Ireland requires approximately 70 additional specialist neurology nurses to meet demand is particularly stark and demonstrates the need for targeted workforce planning and sustained investment.

These findings reinforce the need for immediate and coordinated action to deliver on commitments already made in national policy and within the Programme for Government. Investment in neurology services is not only a healthcare priority but a matter of equity and dignity for those living with neurological conditions and their families.

In response to this report, there must be renewed focus on:

- Delivering equitable access to multidisciplinary neurology services across all regions
- Addressing critical workforce shortages in neurology and neurorehabilitation
- Expanding community-based supports to ensure continuity of care following diagnosis
- Ensuring that Model 3 hospitals have appropriate neurology provision in line with the 2016 Model of Care

People living with neurological conditions should not face unnecessary delays, long journeys, or gaps in care due to where they live. A modern health system must be capable of delivering timely, coordinated, and patient-centred neurological services across the country.

This report provides a clear roadmap for action. The challenge now is to ensure that commitments are translated into measurable progress, with transparent timelines and

accountability mechanisms to ensure that patients and families see real improvements in access to care.

The experiences shared by patients and families in this report must serve as a call to action. It is essential that policymakers, healthcare leaders, and service providers work together to ensure that neurology services in Ireland are adequately resourced, accessible, and responsive to the growing needs of the population.

Deputy Colm Burke TD