



## WHAT IS MS?

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a complex neurodegenerative disease affecting approximately 9,000 of the 4.9 million<sup>1</sup> people in Ireland.

Each person will experience this unpredictable disease differently, but common symptoms often include pain, fatigue, reduced mobility and cognitive dysfunction.

There is currently no cure for MS; however, optimal treatment and support have a significant effect on disease progression and quality of life for people with MS.



PAIN



FATIGUE



REDUCED MOBILITY



COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Healthcare in Ireland is managed by many governmental bodies including the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive.<sup>2</sup>

Healthcare spending is one fifth higher than the European Union average and there is a high rate of voluntary private health insurance.

Despite this, out-of-pocket spending and co-payments remain significant, though some people with long-term health conditions are exempt from some of these additional payments.



COUNTRY RANKING



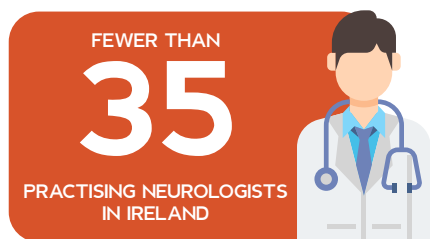
HOW DOES IRELAND SCORE COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

(All countries are evaluated on a 0-100 scale)



# WHAT DID THE BAROMETER FIND?

A nationally ring-fenced budget for infused MS therapies and an MS Clinical Advisory Group within the Irish National Clinical Care Programme have been noted successes in recent years. However, there are still areas for improvement:



There are fewer than 35 practising neurologists in Ireland, one of the lowest per capita numbers in Europe.



Under 30% of people with MS receive occupational rehabilitation, and fewer than 20% receive psychological and cognitive rehabilitation.



There is only 1 dedicated MS care centre – focusing on respite care.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



Establish and provide secure funding for local, community-based multidisciplinary MS teams across the country that include clinical and rehabilitation specialists.



Dedicate funding to the Neurological Rehabilitation Strategy 2019–2021 to ensure that all people with MS have publicly funded rehabilitation programmes spanning psychological, cognitive and occupational support.

Establish a national MS registry with mandatory data collection encompassing clinical, occupational and patient-reported data.



More information can be found at [www.emsp.org](http://www.emsp.org) or contact [aoifek@ms-society.ie](mailto:aoifek@ms-society.ie)

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