



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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26th November 2018

Deputy Denis Naughten,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: denis.naughten@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Naughten,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

PQ 47090/18

To ask the Minister for Health the reason the hourly rate for disability services home support is paid at a lower rate than that for older persons home support; his plans to review same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE provides a range of assisted living services including Personal Assistant and Home Support Services to support individuals to maximise their capacity to live full and independent lives.

PA and Home Support Services are provided either directly by the HSE or through a range of voluntary service providers. The majority of specialised disability provision (80%) is delivered through non-statutory sector service providers.

Services are accessed through an application process or through referrals from public health nurses or other community based staff. Individual's needs are evaluated against the criteria for prioritisation for the particular services and then decisions are made in relation to the allocation of resources. Resource allocation is determined by the needs of the individual, compliance with prioritisation criteria, and the level of resources available. As with every service there is not a limitless resource available for the provision of home support services and while the resources available are substantial, they are finite. In this context, services are discretionary and the number of hours granted is determined by other support services already provided to the person/family.

The HSE is committed to protecting the level of Personal Assistant (PA) services and Home Support services available to persons with disabilities. The 2018 National Service Plan included the HSE's priority to provide 1.46 million hours of personal assistance to more than 2,000 people with a disability, representing an increase of 60,000 hours over the 2017 target of 1.4 million hours. During 2018, the HSE will also provide 2.93 million hours of Home Support to adults and children with a disability, an increase of 180,000 hours over the 2017 target of 2.75 million hours.

Home Support Services for Older People (including Home Care Packages)

The 2018 National Service Plan provides an additional investment of over €18m for home support services which will provide a further 754,000 hours and will support 1,170 people to leave hospitals.

With the approval of the Department of Health, the HSE has set about working on streamlining the home care packages scheme and home help services by moving towards a single funded, 'home support service'. This work is currently in development and will bring together the funding for home help and home care packages. This new approach will provide significant benefits for the service users and, the public and the health system, by;

- 1) making the services easier to understand,
- 2) by streamlining application processes resulting in the requirement to make only one application and decision for home support services for older people and will facilitate service users to move to changed levels of services as their assessed needs change without the need for an additional application process.

Overall, in 2018, 17,094m home support hours are expected to be delivered to 50,500 people at any time.

In addition, Intensive Home Care Packages will be delivered to approximately 235 people at any time and will deliver approximately 360,000 hours in the full year. While the majority of people in receipt of Home Care Packages are aged 65 years or over (approx 85%), a small portion of the target hours are delivered to people with disabilities which may include those with spinal injury, people with mental health issues and to support families.

Hourly rate for Home Support Services

At the time of the tendering process for home support services, this was solely a decision made by Older Persons Services to proceed. The model of support was traditionally for Home Help through Older Persons Services which historically is a different delivery model to that of Home Support by disability services due to the different presenting needs for each cohort.

There is a process within community services to amalgamate the delivery of supports into a person's home across older person and disability services, thus the Home Help title has been dropped and Home Support is the now preferred reference to the service delivery. This is to stream line the management processes and a procurement process will be required in the future for disability services.

The length of time for the current older persons preferred provider framework and the presenting needs of those with a disability, are two key factors for consideration regarding a combined tender approach in the future, or a distinct Disability Services tender approach.

A tender process would have to be considered by the Department of Health in the first instance with due consideration given for a likely increased spend.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations