



Head of Social Care
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Health Service Executive
Model Business Park
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Cork Eircode: T12 HT02

Oifig Cúraim Shóisialta
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Corcaigh Ciarraí
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Bóthar na Modh Feirme
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24th April 2019

Deputy Danny Healy Rae T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ 16135/19:

“To ask the Minister for Health the amount by which the home help budget has been reduced for counties Kerry and Cork in 2019; the reason therefor; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Healy Rae,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I wish to advise that there is no reduction in the Home Help budget for Cork and Kerry in 2019. The budget available for the provision of Home Help services within Cork Kerry Community Healthcare in 2019 is €65,542,066 including monies for Winter Initiative, which is an increase of €2.3m on the 2018 budget.

As you will be aware, a revised Health Care Support Assistant (formerly known as Home Helps) contract has recently been introduced by agreement with SIPTU which represents Home Helps across the country. The new contract recognises that the role of the Health Care Support Assistant (HCSA) has changed significantly over the years. Their role now is mostly focussed on the personal care needs of the people they care for, it involves attending to people's clinical needs. This is a big shift in what people might traditionally think of when they think of the home help service, and that's one of the reasons for the change in title.

The revised contract will mean that HCSAs will be paid for the time which they spend travelling to and between services users. This is a welcome development and treats the HCSAs on the same basis as other healthcare staff. In order to maximise the face to face time with services users we will be reviewing the assignment of HCSAs to service users and over time introducing new rosters.

This is a very valuable service, and we are constantly working to improve it. We are confident that these changes, once they are fully implemented, will mean that the service will be even better placed to deliver the care that people need and depend upon. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is in the process of finalising its implementation plan for the roll out of the revised contract. The implementation plan will focus on maximising the service received by services users within the available budget. The application of the new



contract will mean that the way in which the service is provided will change but our staff will endeavour to ensure that any changes are introduced as seamlessly as possible.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Eileen O'Leary
Acting Head of Social Care
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

