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19 December 2019

Deputy Catherine Martin, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Martin,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) 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 53626/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of occurrences of home help hours being awarded without the funding in place to deliver the hours in each of the past three years in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

The 2019 National Service Plan 2019 provides for;

- 17.9m home support hours to be delivered to 53,000 people inclusive of 410,000 hours/550 home support packages funded under the Winter Initiative 2018/2019
- Intensive Home Care Packages delivered to approximately 235 people with approximately 360,000 hours delivered in the full year

The Home Support Service is funded by Government to deliver a volume of service each year as approved in the HSE National Service Plan. It is a non-statutory service and access to the current service is based on assessment of the person's needs by the HSE and having regard to the available resources and the competing demands for the services from those people with assessed needs. The number of people in receipt of home support at any time will vary having regard to the value of the individual home supports approved and as clients cease and new clients with different value home support are approved and commenced.

Preliminary data currently available reflects the period to the end of October 2019. As of this date, 14,550,922 home support hours were delivered nationally to 51,404 people. Also, as of this date, there were 7,881 people waiting for funding for home support. Please see Table 1 below for Waiting List Clients for 2017 to 2019. In 2017 the service being provided was accounted for in terms of home help hours and Home Care Packages. These two services were combined into the single funded Home Support Service from January 2018.

Please note that the data we hold is collated using the LHO system (Local Health Offices). The majority of the LHOs are counties whereas in more densely populated areas such as Dublin and Cork, those areas are broken down through multiple LHOs.

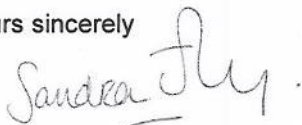
The numbers on the waiting list reflect a point in time and those people who are on the waiting list are reviewed, as funding becomes available, to ensure that individual cases continue to be dealt with on a priority basis within the available resource and as determined by local front line staff who know and understand the clients' needs. If clients are assessed and approved for home support and funding is not immediately available, these cases are included on the waiting list for funding.

€2m additional funding has been allocated under Winter Plan 2019/2020 to support 600 clients off the community Home Support Waiting list and 510 Home Support Packages funded for hospital egress. These additional HSPs are currently being allocated across the CHOs.

The level of activity and associated costs in relation to home support is monitored on an on-going basis by the Chief Officers across their CHOs and with the Head of Operations Services for Older People nationally to ensure that those with the greatest needs are supported and that the overall expenditure on home support services by the HSE does not exceed the available funding.

The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to develop a new stand-alone, statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home support services. Developing a new statutory scheme will be an important step in ensuring that the system operates in a consistent and fair manner for all those who need home support services. The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy commits to the introduction of the new scheme in 2021.

Yours sincerely



Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director
Older Persons Service (Operations)

Table 1 - Home Support Waiting List 2017 to 2019

Waiting List 2019			
Home Support WL to Oct	Funding		Total Per CHO
	New	Additional	
CHO 1	424	325	749
CHO 2	641	91	732
CHO 3	643	315	958
CHO 4	282	211	493
CHO 5	858	363	1,221
CHO 6	12	11	23
CHO 7	788	151	939
CHO 8	523	322	845
CHO 9	1,331	590	1,921
National	5,502	2,379	7,881

Waiting List 2018			
Home Support WL Jan- Dec	Funding		Total Per CHO
	New	Additional	
CHO 1	298	223	521
CHO 2	723	245	968
CHO 3	229	132	361
CHO 4	78	74	152
CHO 5	497	151	648
CHO 6	126	51	177
CHO 7	1,143	20	1,163
CHO 8	341	121	462
CHO 9	1,096	572	1,668
National	4,531	1,589	6,120

Waiting List 2017			
Home Support WL Jan- Dec	Funding		Total Per CHO
	Home Help	HCPs	
CHO 1	152	35	187
CHO 2	187	388	575
CHO 3	157	223	380
CHO 4	141	-	141
CHO 5	258	266	524
CHO 6	274	455	729
CHO 7	300	-	300
CHO 8	723	363	1,086
CHO 9	774	692	1,466
National	2,966	2,422	5,388