



08 March 2019

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald, TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy McDonald,

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 19/9494**

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that applications for home help or homecare packages submitted to the HSE by medical social workers or public health nurses and assessed in favour of provision are not being provided on the basis that the funding is not available to provide the supports and the HSE is unable to advise when the funding will become available; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

**PQ 19/9502**

To ask the Minister for Health the number of applications for home help or homecare packages on the pending list of the HSE

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 number of people waiting for funding for home support services, reflect a point in time. 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 resources and as determined by health and social care professionals who know and understand the clients' needs. Regular review of client care needs are undertaken to ensure that services being provided remain appropriate.

While the resources available for the provision of home support services are substantial, they are finite. The aim is to be as responsive as possible to all applications; however, given the changing demographics and limitation of

the resource, delays can occur. In this context, those clients who are assessed and approved for home support, and who are not being provided immediately with a service, are risk assessed and placed on a waiting list for a resource as it becomes available. In addition, people being discharged from acute hospitals, who are in a position to return home with support, are prioritised.

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 care support needs are approved and commenced.

Nationally, at the end of January 2019, 6,009 people were waiting for funding for new or additional home support services (preliminary data).

The HSE is in the process of implementing a standard national approach to the assessment of care needs of older people. This new approach will assist over time in ensuring a more consistent approach to assessment processes and will help to ensure that waiting list data is aligned across the CHOs.

The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to determine what type of home care scheme is best for Ireland. This process will consider the future design of both the funding and regulation systems for these crucial services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Tuohy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Sandra Tuohy**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**Older Persons Services – Operations**