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Services for Older People

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23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019

**Deputy Brian Stanley,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Stanley,**

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 ref 29400/19**

**To ask the Minister for Health the average cost per hour for home helps employed directly by the HSE; and the average cost per hour for home helps provided to the HSE by agencies.**

Home Support Services are an important component of the provision of service to older people with assessed needs and to support them in their choice of living in their own home and community. The HSE, working within its available resources, has sought to maintain and when possible to expand the range and volume of services available to support people to remain in their own homes, to prevent early admission to long term residential care and to support people to return to their homes following an acute hospital admission.

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, having regard to the available resources and the competing demands for the services from those people with assessed needs. Home Support services for older people, are provided either by directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. The type of support provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties relating to the client's assessed needs.

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

Home support staff who are directly employed by the HSE have traditionally been, and remain, mainly part-time workers due to the nature and flexibility of the work involved and the care needs of clients that must be attended to within specific time frames during any day. The HSE keeps under review the position regarding the number of staff employed having regard to the hours available and the hours worked by existing staff in the local area.

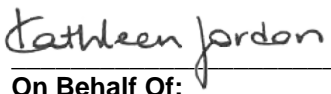
As at 31st March 2019 (available data), there were 6,036 Health Care Support Assistants (HCSAs) directly employed by the HSE.

All directly employed HCSA staff are paid according to the HSE salary scale applicable to that grade i.e. nine point salary scale which currently ranges between €26,789 and €32,470 per annum.

Data in relation to the cost of staff employed by external agencies is not collated by the HSE. External providers operate subject to tender arrangements with the HSE and are paid accordingly.

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,



**On Behalf Of:**  
**Sandra Tuohy**  
**Assistant National Director – Operations**  
**Services for Older People**