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Deputy John Brassil, TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Brassil,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Questions, which were submitted to this Department for response.

**PQ 19/25329**

**To ask the Minister for Health when the HSE will communicate with persons on waiting lists to advise them that new and additional hours are suspended; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 19/25425**

**To ask the Minister for Health the reason healthcare support assistants were informed regarding the embargo on the delivery of a new or additional home support hours through the media; the reason the HSE did not communicate this decision with its staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 19/25341**

**To ask the Minister for Health the examination carried out to ensure compliance to the promise of equity by the HSE when allocating homecare hours to persons awaiting discharge from acute hospital beds versus the community waiting list; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 19/25509**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of older persons waiting for home support packages; and the waiting list for homecare packages by CHO and LHO in tabular form**

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.

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

Funding for home support has a defined budget as set out above in the National Service Plan. The overall allocation for home support has seen a significant increase of almost €140m in the period 2015 to 2019.

Home Support services continue to be provided across the CHOs and as at 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 7,157,942 home support hours have been provided nationally with 7,200 new clients commencing a home support service since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 (preliminary data). Throughout the winter period additional home support was provided to support timely hospital discharge and prevent unnecessary hospital admission

The number of people in receipt of home support at any one 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. As at 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019, there were 52,382 people in receipt of home support (preliminary data) and 238 in receipt of an Intensive Home Care Package.

Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support continues to grow as the population aged over 65 years' increases. All those waiting are assessed and provided with a service, if appropriate, as soon as possible having regard to their assessed needs. In addition, people being discharged from acute hospitals, who are in a position to return home with supports, are prioritised. As of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 6,813 people nationally were waiting for funding for a home support service. See Table 1 below for a breakdown by CHO.

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.

There is a requirement to ensure that the level of service provision is in line with the available funding per the National Service Plan and the overall home care resource is carefully managed to ensure that this key service is available at the required times, in a flexible way and at the appropriate standard to support clients' changing assessed needs.

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.

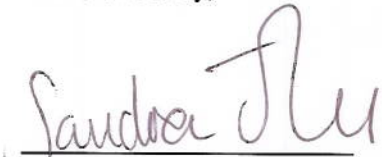
The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to develop a new stand-alone, statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home support services.

- This is a key action under the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and will improve access to home support services.
- It will also help to improve access to the home support services that people need in an affordable and sustainable way.
- The system of regulation for home support will help to ensure that the public can be confident that the services provided are of a high standard.

- The Sláintecare Action Plan 2019 also sets out a very significant programme of work aimed out developing and improving health and social care generally, with a significant emphasis on increased community-based supports.

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 – Operations**  
**Services for Older People**

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	110.7	108.4	105.3	102.1
2	108.5	106.2	103.1	99.9
3	106.3	104.0	100.9	97.7
4	104.1	101.8	98.7	95.5
5	101.9	99.6	96.5	93.3
6	99.7	97.4	94.3	91.1
7	97.5	95.2	92.1	88.9
8	95.3	93.0	89.9	86.7
9	93.1	90.8	87.7	84.5
10	90.9	88.6	85.5	82.3
11	88.7	86.4	83.3	80.1
12	86.5	84.2	81.1	77.9

**Table 1 – Home Support Waiting List – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019**

<b>CHO</b>	<b>Waiting List - 31st May 2019</b>	<b>Waiting on Funding for New Service</b>	<b>Waiting on Funding for Additional Service</b>
<b>National Total</b>	<b>6,819</b>	<b>4,948</b>	<b>1,871</b>
CHO 1	742	379	363
CHO 2	779	669	110
CHO 3	523	392	131
CHO 4	286	150	136
CHO 5	768	570	198
CHO 6	208	139	69
CHO 7	1,080	941	139
CHO 8	523	395	128
CHO 9	1,910	1,313	597