



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta  
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3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019

**Deputy Barry Cowen, TD**  
**Dáil Eireann,**  
**Leinster House,**  
**Kildare Street,**  
**Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Cowen,**

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 19/25562**

**To ask the Minister for Health if an analysis has been carried out to assess the cost differential between a patient staying in an acute bed versus receiving home help hours; the average cost of keeping a person in an acute bed for a week; the cost per week of using home help hours; if the cost is less, the reason he is not increasing spending on home help while reducing spending on the acute side; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

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.

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



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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 average cost of providing home support on a weekly basis based on a client in receipt of an average of 6.5 hours of home support is approximately €160.00 per week. It is important to note that access to home support is based on the assessed needs of each individual client.

The Healthcare Pricing Office (HPO) of the National Finance Division of the HSE has indicated that the average cost per in-patient stay per night in 2017 (latest figures available) across acute hospitals was €878. This is an average cost, across all nights, all hospitals, and all types of in-patient cases from the most routine to the most complex. It should also be noted that this is a 'fully absorbed' cost i.e. treatment costs (such as diagnostics, theatres etc.) as well as 'hotel' costs are included but excludes capital costs, depreciation, day case, outpatient and emergency department costs.

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 at 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan".

**On behalf of Sandra Tuohy  
Assistant National Director – Operations  
Services for Older People**

