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Deputy O'Reilly, TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 19001/19**

**To ask the Minister for Health if a person refusing home help hours or declining a particular home help staff member to care for them is entitled to alternative personnel or to reapply for home help hours at a later date; if a refusal renders their application null and void; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

Home support services for older people, funded by the HSE, are provided either by directly employed home support staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal 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 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 therefore there is no automatic entitlement to a service. 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. Currently no means test is applied and clients are not required to pay any charge or contribution towards the HSE funded Home Support Service.

With the approval of the Department of Health, the HSE moved to a single funded Home Support Service from 1st January 2018 combining the Home Help service and the Home Care Package scheme into a single service – the Home Support Service for Older People. The HSE is currently implementing the single approach across the system in order to streamline services, and their delivery, to make the Home Support Service easier to understand and to reduce the complexity of the application process for clients.

The 2019 National Service Plan 2019 provides for the following;

- 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

Once a client is assessed and approved for home support and funding is available to commence the support, he/she is assigned home support hours provided by either a directly employed HSE staff member(s) or a staff member(s) from one of the HSE's approved providers. In assigning staff due regard is given to the competencies of the staff members in meeting the assessed needs of the individual client. In circumstances where a client declines a particular home support worker for whatever reason, local managers in the area will endeavour to make alternative arrangements. Furthermore, refusal of service does not deem the client ineligible to make a subsequent application.

Yours sincerely,



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