



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta
Tel: 061 483245
Email: olderpeople.operations@hse.ie

Office of the Assistant National Director - Operations
Services for Older People
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27 May 2019

Deputy Niamh Smyth, TD
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Smyth,

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 20713/19

To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to deal with the on-going crisis in relation to the provision of home help hours; 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 resource is used to its maximum effect as part of each individual recipient's care plan.

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 and having regard to the available resources and the competing demands for the services from those people with assessed needs. There has been a significant increase in the funding available for the provision of home support services in recent years; an increase of circa €110m since 2015.

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

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 value home support are approved and commenced. As at 30th April 2019, there were 52,329 people in receipt of home support and April YTD 5,661,457 home support hours have been provided (preliminary data).

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 30th April 2019, 6,310 people nationally were waiting for funding for a home support service.



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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.
- 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.
- 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.

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, appearing to read 'Sandra Tuohy', written over a horizontal line.

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People