



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse
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Services for Older People
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27 May 2019

Deputy Boyd Barrett, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Barrett,

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 20884/19

To ask the Minister for Health of each CHO has enough funding to provide the home support and respite care packages necessary for all those in need nationally; 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.

From 1st January 2018, with the approval of the Department of Health, the funding for both the former Home Help Service and the Home Care Package Scheme has been combined into a single service now known as the Home Support Service for Older People.

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 funding being made available for the provision of home support services; an increase of circa €140 million since 2014.

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



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Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to the end of April 2019. 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.

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.

The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to determine what type of home care scheme is best for Ireland. This process will consider the future design of both the funding and regulation systems for 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra Tuohy".

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People