



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse
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27 May 2019

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

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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 21156/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of personnel engaged in the delivery of home care packages; the number of outstanding applications; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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.

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 HSE provides the vast majority of its home support services through directly employed home support staff, to a lesser extent through arrangements with voluntary (not for profit) providers mainly in the Greater Dublin Area, Wicklow and Clare (where HSE direct home help service provision was never a feature) with some provision through tendered arrangements with private (for profit) providers. The type of support that is provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties relating to the client's needs.

Home support staff who are directly employed by the HSE have traditionally been, and remain, mainly part-time workers due to the nature and flexibility of the work involved and the care needs of clients that must be attended to within specific time frames during any day.

The HSE keeps under review the position regarding the number of staff employed having regard to the hours available and the hours worked by existing staff in the local area. As at end March 2019 (available data) there were 6,036 Health Care Support Assistants (HCSAs) directly employed by the HSE.

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



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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.

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

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. The changes being implemented by the HSE to streamline the current services will support the work being undertaken by the Department.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People