



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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18th October 2019

Deputy Penrose,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Penrose,

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 ref 30437/19

To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide a breakdown of the regional variations in the eligibility and allocation of services relating to publicly funded homecare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Home support services for older people 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.

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 31st August, there were 51,588 people in receipt of home support (preliminary data) and 222 in receipt of an Intensive Home Care Package.

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



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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.

At the end of August, there were 7,255 people (preliminary data) nationally assessed and approved for home supports (new or additional) who were waiting for funding to be available. 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 HSE is currently implementing a 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 National Guidelines & Procedures for Standardised Implementation of the Home Support Service 2018 provides guidance and procedures to each of the CHOs on operating the service. These guidelines are available for download at the following link: - <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/service-arrangement-documents.html>

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. 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,

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People