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15th October 2019.

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

Dear Deputy Adams,

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 40202/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of home support hours which have been approved and enacted since June 2019 - Gerry Adams.

PQ 40204/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of home help hours allocated to County Louth; and if home help hours are recycled within a county or on a CHO wide basis - Gerry Adams.

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;

- 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

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.

While the resources for the provision of home support are substantial, they are finite. The aim is to be as responsive as possible to all applications; however, given the changing demographics and limitation of the resource, delays can occur. In this context, those clients who are assessed and approved for home support, and who are not being provided immediately with a service, are risk assessed and placed on a waiting list for a resource as it becomes available.

As at 31st August 2019 (preliminary data), 11,572,809 home support hours to 51,588 people nationally. As of same date 10,490 clients have commenced a home support service since 1st January 2019 and 7,255 people assessed and waiting on funding for homes support.


In the period June to August 2019 inclusive, a total of 4,410,516 home support hours were delivered nationally. During the same period, 3,290 new clients have commenced their home support service. It should be noted that the hours associated with those new clients are included in the above figure of 4.4m home support hours for the period in question (preliminary data).

The expected activity by year end for 2019 for County Louth is 449,549 home support hours. As at 31st August, a total of 267,904 hours have been delivered to 1,649 clients (preliminary data).

The level of activity and associated costs in relation to home support is monitored on an on-going basis by the Chief Officers across their CHOs and with the Head of Operations Services for Older People nationally to ensure that those with the greatest needs are supported and that the overall expenditure on home support services by the HSE does not exceed the available funding.

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
Older Persons Services – Operations