



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 Michael McGrath,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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 40537/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of private firms providing homecare services nationwide; the position in relation to the regulation of these firms; the number that are regulated; the number of regulated and unregulated firms being paid for service provision by the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Home Support services for older people, funded by the HSE, are provided either by directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender 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 HSE has a long history of very close working relationships with providers of home support services and particularly with voluntary providers in the Greater Dublin area, Wicklow and Clare where historically there is no tradition of directly employed home support staff.

As the service expanded over the years, and as "Private Providers" entered the market, providing much needed capacity to enable more people to remain at home for longer, there was a need to put in place formal arrangements with external providers to ensure fairness and transparency in selection of service providers and, in the absence of regulation, to ensure an appropriate standard of services being delivered.

Voluntary and Private Providers have been engaged with HSE since 2011 in the national tendering process and since 2014 with working towards the streamlining of home support services. This work culminated in home help services and the home care packages scheme being brought together into a single funded service in 2018 in agreement with the Department of Health, in preparation for the planned introduction of a home support scheme and regulation of the home support sector.

Tenders undertaken in 2016 and 2018 prepared for and supported the streamlining process. Smaller providers who might otherwise not be in a position to tender were enabled to engage with the process as the HSE facilitated arrangements for providers to align enabling them to tender as a consortium. In addition at CHO level the HSE has engaged with providers where they wished to amalgamate in order to provide a more sustainable and efficient service.

The Tender 2018 process required interested providers to demonstrate their capacity to deliver care across a specific geographical area which were divided into specific lots and to meet an agreed set of quality criteria. Those who could demonstrate this capacity and who met the pricing criteria were approved. In order to be on the provider list for HSE funding to provide home support for new home support clients, the provider must have been approved to provide the service for new support packages commencing after 1st September 2018. Clients in receipt of services prior to 1st



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September 2018 are not impacted and remain with their existing provider until their need for the service is concluded or they transfer to an alternative provider.

Some providers chose to tender as part of a consortium in order to provide service capacity across the lot(s) that they applied for. Other providers chose not to do so, and either applied as a single provider or made a decision not to apply. For providers who did not tender, it is important to note, existing packages of home support remain with them until the client no longer requires the service. However, since the commencement of Tender 2018, providers who have not gone through the tender process not being part of an approved provider list, will not be routinely offered new clients.

In the absence of regulation of the home support service sector, the HSE undertook Tender processes in 2012, 2016 and more recently in 2018, to identify approved providers who would provide home support services to HSE clients where HSE directly provided services are not available. The Tender process requires providers to demonstrate their capacity to deliver care and to meet an agreed set of 23 quality specifications including requirements in relation to:

- Person Centred Care and Support
- Consent
- Policies and Procedures
- Quality Control
- Safeguarding
- Governance and Accountability
- Workforce Requirements
- Training and Development
- Supervision
- Health and Safety

Only those who can demonstrate this capacity and who meet pricing criteria are approved. The HSE continues to engage with both Voluntary and Private Providers on an on-going basis both at national level and locally with service managers to ensure that providers meet these requirements. The list of Approved Providers per CHO area, under the current Tender, is available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/home-support-services/choosing-an-approved-provider/>.

It is important to note that there may be home care providers (For Profit and Not for Profit) operating at present who currently do not deliver any HSE funded services. The HSE does not hold a comprehensive listing of all of these home care providers as there is no legislative basis that requires the HSE to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People