



Oifig an Cheannasaí Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse - Oibríochtaí

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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Email: olderpeople.operations@hse.ie

30/10/2019

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

Dear Deputy Lahart,

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: 41930/19

To ask the Minister for Health the grounds and protocols on which home support hours are allocated

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.

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 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 demand for the Home Support Services, and for additional supports through the Intensive Home Care Package Scheme, continues to grow as the population of older people expands and as more older people with complex care needs are maintained at home. While the resources available are substantial, and every effort is being made to provide people with the services at the times and on the days they are required, the resources are nonetheless finite. Clients are prioritised for service provision dependent on their individual assessed needs.

Professional staff on the front line who are aware of local circumstances, as well as undertaking the initial care needs assessment, also undertake care needs reviews so as to ensure that services are targeted at those clients with a high level of dependency and in accordance with their assessed need. If a client's need changes, the client or carer can request a review by contacting the local health office.

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.

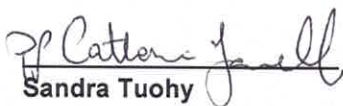
The overall home support resource and the range of providers, including HSE directly employed staff, is carefully managed to ensure that this key service is available in a flexible way and at the appropriate standard to support clients' changing assessed needs.

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.

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**