



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Bainisteoir Ginearálta,
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine
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Deputy Pat the Cope Gallagher
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

8th October 2019

PQ ref 38180/19

To ask the Minister for Health the measures he plans to take as part of the winter plan initiative to alleviate the backlog at present in allocating home help hours in County Donegal; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the present waiting times are the longest ever in duration and that the current length of time to obtain a homecare package is up to 20 weeks before patients can avail of hours approved; if his attention has been further drawn to the fact that this is having an adverse effect on bed occupation in hospitals nationally; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Gallagher

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position for County Donegal.

Donegal Home Care Services are committed to working closely with the acute and community hospitals to ensure a focused cohesive approach to managing the expected pressures on the system during the coming winter 2019 -2020.

However, despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support continues to grow. The main reason for increased demand relates to the increase in demographics of older people across the county. This increase is set to continue each year. As the numbers in the over 65-years age group increase, demand for new home supports increases and, as those already in receipt of services become more dependent, demand for additional supports for existing clients also 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.

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 resources and as determined by local front line staff who know and understand the clients' needs, and who undertake regular reviews of those care needs to ensure that the services being provided remain appropriate.

Ultimately, the HSE is fully committed to supporting older people to return home, or remain at home, for as long as possible where this is their wish. However, it is important to note that the allocation of funding for home support across the system, though significant, is finite and service delivery must be delivered within the available budget.

I trust that this is of assistance, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose Mooney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Yours sincerely".

Rose Mooney, Acting GM

On behalf of
Martin Collum
General Manager
Services for Older Persons
CHO 1.