



15 December 2020

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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: 20/39941

To ask the Minister for Health the policy in place in relation to home help services administrating medication and instilling eye drops to those availing of home help services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Home Support Services play an important role in providing personal care to people in their own homes and support to carers. Home Support services for older people 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.

Home Support services are provided by both directly employed Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) and Approved Providers with formal tendered arrangements with the HSE. The National Guidelines and Procedures for Home Support are available to all Home Support staff, both direct and indirect, and include guidance on medication management. These guidelines are also available publicly at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/national-guidelines-and-procedures-for-the-standardised-implementation-of-the-home-support-service-hss-guidelines.pdf>

In relation to Approved Providers with formal tender arrangements under the Tender 2018 Framework, the contractual requirements of those Providers require absolute compliance with 23 service specifications. In particular, service specification number 12, requires the Provider to have a Medicines Management Policy. Therefore, each Provider must have their own Medicines Management Policy that must be compliant with specification 12, which states:

The Service Provider shall ensure that they have a clear and up to date written policy on Medicines Management which is adhered to by all staff. It identifies the parameters and circumstances for assisting with medicines in the client's home. The policy is supported by training. Training is updated as required in response to legislation and service users' requirements.

The policy will include the following:

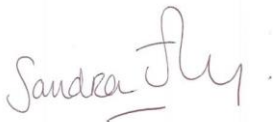
Procedures:

- For obtaining prescriptions
- For obtaining prescribed medicines
- For recording information on the schedule of services maintained in the client's file Assistance with prompting to take medicines (as identified in the Care Needs Assessment and is detailed in the Home Support Plan)
- Non nursing home care support staff may only provide assistance with prompting the service user to take medicines and must record all prompts in the schedule of services/Home Support Plan record.
- Assistance with prompting to take medicines is only performed with the informed consent and authorisation of the service user and or/their representative as per the Home Support Plan agreed with the contracting authority & the service provider.

It must be noted that Home Support services provided for under the provisions of Tender 2018, is a non-nursing service and therefore Home Support staff may only prompt the service user to take their medication. This is also the case for home support staff directly employed by the HSE.

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.

Yours sincerely,



Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People