



29 December 2020

**Deputy Cathal Crowe, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Crowe,

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 42304/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of older persons waiting for home support hours at the end of November 2020; the way in which this compares to the same date in 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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.

The number of people waiting for funding for home support services, reflect a point in time. Those people who are on the waiting list have been assessed and are reviewed, as funding becomes available, to ensure that individual cases continue to be dealt with on a priority basis within the available resources, having regard to the client's assessed needs and current Public Health advice.

Preliminary data currently available reflects the period to end of October 2020. As of this date, 14,387,654 home support hours were delivered nationally to 52,760 people. Also, as of this date, there were 2,498 people waiting for funding for new or additional home support. As of the same period last year (October 2019), there were 7,881 people waiting for funding for home support at that time, which represents a reduction of 68% in the twelve month period.

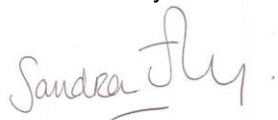
There has been a significant reduction in the number of people assessed and waiting on funding for home support in 2020 – this has been as a result of a number of factors including validation of waiting lists and availability of funding to address those waiting. Further funding to provide an additional 5m hours in 2021, as part of the Winter Plan 2020/2021, will enable the HSE to keep the number of clients assessed and waiting on funding to a minimum in addition to the provision of packages of care to support reablement and those with complex care needs in order to avoid long-term care. This will amount to a service provision of approximately 24m hours in 2021.

As the country moves into the parameters of the new "Roadmap for Living with Covid", the HSE continues to work closely with providers and community staff to identify where service is most required. This is to ensure, insofar as possible, that Home Support Services can continue where needed most. The requirements of physical distancing

must be encouraged, supported and maintained so as to keep our staff and service users safe and prevent any further spread of the virus.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Tuohy". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director
Services for Older People – Operations