



29 December 2020

Deputy Emer Higgins,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Higgins,

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: 20/42630

To ask the Minister for Health the procedures and quality checks in place to monitor the care carried out by home help organisations contracted to carry out home caring work in the homes of persons; if there is a feedback mechanism for receivers of this care; 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 all service users. The National Home Support Guidelines and Procedures are available publicly and include guidance and information on how the service functions including information on governance of the service, periodic reviews of care for all Home Support clients. The document also includes information pertaining to feedback mechanisms such as the "Your Service, Your Say" platform – where a Home Support client can submit a comment, compliment or complaint. Please follow the link hereunder to view the document:

<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 with the HSE; under the current Tender Framework, the contractual requirements of those Providers require compliance with 23 Service Specifications. In particular, the following service specifications address the elements of your query;

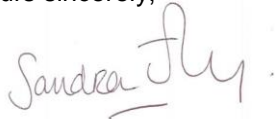
- **Service Specification No. 4**, which deals with Complaints and the policies which Providers must have in place
- **Service Specification No. 9**, which deals with Quality Control
- **Service Specification No 14**, which deals with Governance and Accountability.

Each provider must have the relevant policies in place pertaining to each Service Specification and be available for inspection at all times by the HSE. Further detailed information relating to the current Tender Service Specifications for Approved Providers can be found here;

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/service-specifications-home-support-services-2018.pdf>

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