



29 December 2020

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Boyd Barrett,

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: 42846/20

To ask the Minister for Health the different supports available to keep elderly persons in their homes for as long as possible and the way in which to access those supports; 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.

The allocation of funding for Home Support across the system, though significant, is finite and service delivery must therefore be delivered within the funding available. The level of activity and associated costs must be managed in each of the nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) in a way that ensures those with the greatest needs are supported and that the overall expenditure on Home Support services by the HSE does not exceed the available funding.

The HSE is committed in supporting older people to remain at home or to return home following a period of acute admission with a range of supports including the provision of Home Support services where this is deemed necessary following a clinical assessment of their individual care needs. The HSE is aware that the preference for many of our older people is to remain at home for as long as possible as in doing so, retain their independence and social contacts, with the appropriate supports in place.

In general, and aside from the ongoing impact of COVID-19, there are many supports available to older people such as;

- Home Support
- Daycare Centres
- Meals on Wheels services
- Residential Services including long stay care, respite care and short stay care

The above services are coordinated by the Community Healthcare Organisation and in many cases, operate and are organised in tandem with Primary Care Teams within a person's community, such as;

- Family Doctor
- Public Health Nurses
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech and Language Therapists.

The pathway for accessing the many services which older people can avail of, involves an initial Care Needs Assessment, which identifies an individual's dependencies and care needs and ensures that appropriate care is provided in the most appropriate setting. A health professional will assess a person's ability to look after themselves safely; for example; personal hygiene, movement/mobility, continence management, preparing meals and essential environmental care/cleaning and caring for their home. Following this assessment a Care Plan will be prepared showing the care that will be provided to meet the identified care needs and all the actions to be undertaken by relevant services and care staff involved. This may be at home or in a residential home. If Home Support is a requirement for a person, then the Home Support Plan identify individual care needs.

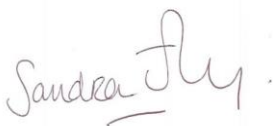
Further funding in 2021 will provide for an additional 5m home support hours as part of the Winter Plan 2020/2021. This will enable the HSE to keep the number of clients assessed and waiting on funding to a minimum in addition to the provision of packages of care to support reablement and those with complex care needs in order to avoid long-term care. This will amount to a service provision of approximately 24m hours in 2021.

More information on accessing services, can be found at the following web-link: -

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/3/carerssupport/caringforolderpeople.html>

The spread of COVID-19 throughout our communities has posed significant challenges for many areas of our Older Person's Services and the HSE continues to work closely with providers, community staff and residential care centres to identify where services are most required. This is to ensure, insofar as possible, that 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.

Yours sincerely,



Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People