



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta  
Tel: 061 483245  
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Office of the Assistant National Director - Operations  
Services for Older People  
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**4 August 2020**

**Deputy Jackie Cahill, TD**  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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 16694/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health the position regarding funding for homecare packages; 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 2020 National Service Plan provides for;

- 18.9m home support hours to be delivered to 53,700 people inclusive of 770,000 hours/2,210 home support packages funded under the Winter Initiative 2019/2020, and 230,000 hours relating to the Home Support Pilot Scheme to commence Q2 2020
- Intensive Home Care Packages delivered to approximately 235 people with approximately 360,000 hours delivered in the full year

Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support continues to grow as the population aged over 65 years' 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.

The spread of COVID-19 throughout our communities has posed significant challenges for many areas of our Older Person's Services, including Home Support Services. At present, the CHOs are in the process of restoring home support services. In order to maximise the capacity available, consideration has to be given to balancing delivery of service against suspended clients, clients assessed and waiting on commencement of home support services and the continued requirement to meet the needs of higher priority clients currently in receipt of services.

As the country moves through the phases of the easing of Government restrictions, 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



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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.

As this is an evolving and unprecedented situation, the HSE will keep matters under review and will advise clients and/or family members accordingly. Furthermore, the HSE acknowledges the valuable role of carers and families, home support workers and providers across the services in supporting older people and their care groups throughout this challenging period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Tuohy".

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**Sandra Tuohy**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**Services for Older People – Operations**