



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta  
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**10 June 2020**

**Deputy Claire Kerrane, TD**  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Kerrane,

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 7900/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health if funding will be put in place to clear homecare waiting lists in order to keep persons at home during Covid-19; and the number of persons waiting for homecare packages**

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 spread of COVID-19 throughout our communities has posed significant challenges for many areas of our Older Person's Services, including Home Support Services. The HSE engaged in a detailed prioritisation review early on in the Pandemic so as to identify those most in need of services. In addition, the Local Authorities have taken a lead role in working with community and voluntary agencies in relation to supporting people to remain at home by providing & co-ordinating a range of supports, such as Meals on Wheels, collection and delivery of food, essential household items, fuel, medication etc.

As a result of the national effort across all Community Healthcare Organisations throughout the country, some aspects of normal monthly reporting have been delayed. Preliminary data currently available reflects the period to the end of April 2020. As of this date, 5,548,168 home support hours were delivered nationally to 50,845 people. Also, as of this date, there were 6,982 people waiting for funding for new or additional home support.

The HSE continues to review both those clients whose home support service may have been temporarily suspended and those clients of higher priority currently in receipt of home support services, to consider if an individual client's level of need has altered and regard given to the level and types of service that could be provided which may require a restoration of service, additional home support service or the provision of other forms of support through community and voluntary services. The HSE also keeps in review those clients who are presently waiting on funding to commence their home support service and where funding becomes available, those which fall into either Priority 1 or 2 may have their service commenced, having regard to the client's assessed needs and Public Health advice.

As the country moves through Phase Two 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,



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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.

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 difficult period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Tuohy".

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