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17 November 2020

Deputy James Lawless, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Lawless,

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 33461/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of homecare support hours will be provided for older persons in 2021; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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 that was due to commence in 2020, now to commence in 2021.
- Intensive Home Care Packages delivered to approximately 235 people with approximately 360,000 hours delivered in the full year

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.

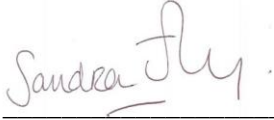
Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support, and its importance as an alternative service to long stay care, has grown considerably over the past number of years. Similarly, the type of Home Support that is now required to meet the needs of the population is a more person-centred personal care model. Notwithstanding this, 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.

With regard to the National Service Plan 2021, five million additional home support hours will be provided over and above the 2020 NSP target. This will bring the total quantum of home support to circa 24m hrs in 2021. This represents a 26% increase in service provision and is a significant investment in home support services that will enable the HSE to further build on a Home First approach that will support those with high and moderate levels of frailty, including people with dementia, to remain at home.

The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to develop the new stand-alone, statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home support services. This process includes the roll-out of the above pilot scheme and will inform and prepare both the Department and the HSE for the imminent regulation of same.

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 require home support services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sandra Tuohy".

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director
Services for Older People – Operations