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30 November 2020

**Deputy David Cullinane, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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 36781/20

To ask the Minister for Health the status of the home care waiting list for each month in 2019 and 2020; the number of hours delivered to date in 2020; the number of hours planned to be delivered in 2020; 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 number of people waiting for funding for home support services, reflect a point in time. Those people who are on the waiting list have been assessed and are reviewed, as funding becomes available, to ensure that individual cases continue to be dealt with on a priority basis within the available resources, having regard to the client's assessed needs and current Public Health advice.

As at the end of October 2020, 14,387,654 home support hours were delivered nationally to 52,760 people. Also, as of this date, there were 2,498 people waiting for funding for new or additional home support. Please see Appendix 1 below which details the waiting list figures per month for 2019 and 2020.

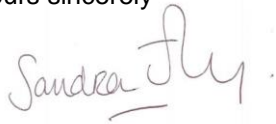
There has been a significant reduction in the number of people assessed and waiting on funding for home support in 2020 – this has been as a result of a number of factors including validation of waiting lists and availability of funding to address those waiting. Further funding to provide an additional 5m hours in 2021, as part of the Winter Plan 2020/2021, 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.

As the country moves into the parameters of the new "Roadmap for Living with Covid", 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 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.

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
Services for Older People – Operations

Appendix 1 – Home Support Waiting List Data - 2019 and 2020 (per month)

Description	Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Home Support Waiting List	2020	7,888	7,827	7,522	6,982	6,076	5,689	4,550	4,030	2,964	2,498	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>
Home Support Waiting List	2019	6,059	6,048	6,238	6,310	6,819	7,217	7,346	7,255	7,667	7,881	7,597	7,819