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**13 October 2020**

**Deputy John Lahart, TD**  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Lahart,

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 27584/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of the 4.76 million additional home support hours that will be provided in each LHO area over the course of the HSE Winter Plan; and the number of home support hours that will be provided in each as a result of the provision by each LHO in tabular form - John Lahart.**

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.

Winter preparedness for the upcoming season 2020/21 has been finalised and the comprehensive recent publication in respect of same (HSE Winter Plan 2020/21) is available here;

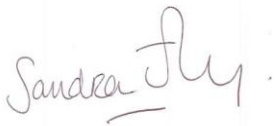
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/winter-planning-within-the-covid19-pandemic-october-2020-april-2021.pdf>

Plans are currently underway to allocate the additional 4.7m hours funded under the Winter Plan across the CHOs. The allocation per CHO will have regard to the number of available NHSS/long term residential care beds per CHO, current waiting list numbers and the percentage population over 65-years. The allocation of the hours will be communicated in due course to each Chief Officer.

As the country moves through 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



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