



30th December 2021

**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 61776/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of home support hours being provided in each LHO area as of 1 December 2021 or the latest date available; the way that compares to target in each LHO area for the same time period; the number of persons currently on the waiting list for home support hours in each LHO area; and the number waiting 0 to 3, 3 to 6, 6 to 12 and more than 12 months plus, respectively in tabular form.

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 National Service Plan for 2021 provides for the following: -

- 23.67m home support hours to be delivered to 55,675 people by year end, inclusive of an additional 5m hours funded under the Winter Plan 2020/2021
- 230,000 hours to be delivered as part of the Home Support Pilot Scheme to commence in 2021 and
- 360,000 home support hours provided to 235 people under the Intensive Home Support Scheme

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.

Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to end of November 2021. As of this date, 18,667,927 Home Support hours were delivered nationally to 55,121 people. Also, as of this date, there were 455 people waiting for funding for new or additional home support, while 4,975 people were approved for Home Support but are awaiting a carer to be assigned. It should be noted that despite capacity challenges experienced nationwide within Home Support services, overall service delivery has increased by 15% based on activity levels for the same period last year. Please see Appendix below for a breakdown of activity levels as at November 2021 YTD.

Please note that data requested (waiting 0 to 3, 3 to 6, 6 to 12 and more than 12 months plus) is not currently collated nationally. While this information may be available locally, it would take considerable resources to collate this nationally.

With regards to the Home Support waiting list, the HSE is aware that there are increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. The HSE continues to advertise on an ongoing basis for Health Care Assistants (HCSAs) and recruits as many suitable candidates, where possible. The HSE conducts its recruitment through a variety of channels both at local level and through the shared service offices of HBS. Due to the nature of Healthcare Support Assistants, this recruitment is normally conducted at a very local level and is on-going continually across the HSE in an effort to ensure availability of carers. Approved Home Support Providers also continue to recruit home support workers. Efforts are ongoing to meet the demand for home support services. As at the end of September 2021 (latest quarterly report available) there were 5,170 directly employed HCSAs (headcount).

While there are sometimes delays between the approval of funding and the availability of carers to commence delivery of home support hours in certain regions, significant work is underway to address these challenges. This includes work within the Department of Health to establish a Strategic Workforce Advisory Group to include key stakeholders including the HSE to look in detail at issues of recruitment, retention, skills development, pay and conditions, and sustainable employment of home support workers into the future.

The Minister for Health, in recent days, has invited submissions from key stakeholders in order to afford organisations an opportunity to set out current workforce challenges; to gather data and evidence to support scoping the nature and extent of the issue in advance of the Department bringing the relevant stakeholders together in a structured process.

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
Community Operations
Services for Older People

Appendix 1 – Home Support Activity – November 2021 YTD

CHO	LHO	% Variance	Hours Delivered	Clients in Receipt	Waiting List	
		Act vsTgt	Total	Total	Funding	Carers
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan	-13.5%	462,338	1,242	-	196
CHO 1	Donegal	-13.0%	828,434	1,747	51	72
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim	-17.2%	533,163	1,361	-	51
CHO 1	Total	-14.4%	1,823,935	4,350	51	319
CHO 2	Galway	-1.6%	1,113,805	3,473	-	278
CHO 2	Mayo	-17.2%	629,755	2,144	-	309
CHO 2	Roscommon	-8.8%	392,987	1,123	-	118
CHO 2	Total	-8.1%	2,136,547	6,740	-	705
CHO 3	Clare	2.2%	535,509	1,488	43	136
CHO 3	Limerick	-17.5%	576,066	1,778	21	147
CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	-12.9%	456,512	1,363	-	158
CHO 3	Total	-10.2%	1,568,087	4,629	64	441
CHO 4	Kerry	-26.8%	650,720	2,506	1	180
CHO 4	North Cork	-23.4%	399,294	1,550	-	95
CHO 4	North Lee	-21.6%	527,874	2,053	-	87
CHO 4	South Lee	-8.5%	702,316	2,057	-	240
CHO 4	West Cork	-25.1%	313,992	914	-	109
CHO 4	Total	-20.7%	2,594,196	9,080	1	711
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	-27.0%	459,302	1,575	-	123
CHO 5	South Tipperary	-38.1%	306,950	1,375	-	178
CHO 5	Waterford	-19.6%	384,399	1,467	-	251
CHO 5	Wexford	-30.0%	593,299	1,760	-	848
CHO 5	Total	-28.8%	1,743,949	6,177	-	1,400
CHO 6	Dublin South East	12.1%	541,942	1,502	-	-
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire	16.5%	734,048	1,783	-	154
CHO 6	Wicklow	-32.3%	470,498	1,221	-	46
CHO 6	Total	-3.5%	1,746,488	4,506	-	200
CHO 7	Dublin South City	-13.0%	435,673	1,496	39	121
CHO 7	Dublin South West	-10.4%	590,333	1,691	132	198
CHO 7	Dublin West	-12.1%	463,208	1,330	30	192
CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow	-34.0%	626,207	1,691	77	86
CHO 7	Total	-19.7%	2,115,421	6,208	278	597
CHO 8	Laois Offaly	-7.2%	498,234	1,415	-	-
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath	-11.3%	498,568	1,404	-	126
CHO 8	Louth	-26.3%	376,713	1,430	-	112
CHO 8	Meath	-10.1%	528,309	1,685	-	292
CHO 8	Total	-13.5%	1,901,824	5,934	-	530
CHO 9	Dublin North	-8.9%	1,205,169	3,070	12	72
CHO 9	Dublin North Central	-11.6%	930,057	2,216	29	-
CHO 9	Dublin North West	44.4%	902,255	2,211	20	-
CHO 9	Total	1.3%	3,037,481	7,497	61	72
National Total		-13.4%	18,667,927	55,121	455	4,975