



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta  
Tel: 061 483245  
Email: olderpeople.operations@hse.ie

Office of the Assistant National Director - Operations  
Services for Older People  
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29 January 2021

Deputy Emer Higgins, TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Higgins,

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 4113/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health if supports are available to access PPE by persons who are caring for an elderly person or a person with a disability in their home who has contracted Covid-19 in order to protect the carer.**

Home Support Services are an important component of the provision of service to older people with assessed needs and to support them in their choice of living in their own home and community. 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 and as the country moves through the phases 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, 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.

**Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)**

The HSE continues to supply appropriate PPE to HSE directly employed home support staff and to Approved Home Support Provider for their home support staff use in accordance with current Public Health and is supplied through the PPE supply chain established at local level. Guidance on the use of PPE is available at the following web-link: -

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/Current%20recommendations%20for%20use%20of%20Personal%20Protective%20Equipment.pdf>

The HSE has issued Guidance for Health and Social Care Workers who visit homes. It is available on the Health Protection Surveillance Centre website at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/healthandsocialcareworkers/>

This guidance is to help home support staff and personal assistants to take the best possible infection prevention and control measures to protect the people they care for and themselves. Good hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and environmental hygiene remain critical to minimise the risk to staff and patients/clients of the transmission of COVID-19. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/>



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At this time, the provision of PPE to family carers has not been indicated by Public Health or the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

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 challenging period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Tuohy".

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