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13th October 2021

**Deputy Noel Grealish, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Grealish,

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 46892/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will implement a reablement programme in each community health area as a matter of urgency similar to the successful pilot reablement programme run in north Dublin city in 2013 which proved to reduce the number of persons requiring home help and save money for the health service; if his attention has been drawn to the extent of the proven benefits of such a programme in terms of health and cost savings; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Noel Grealish

Home Support Services play an important role in providing personal care to people in their own homes and support to carers. Home Support services for older people are provided either by directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. The type of support provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties relating to the client's 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.

The Winter Plan for 2020/2021 has been framed in the context of an increasing demand for unscheduled care, the need to support service continuity and resumption of services and delivering essential healthcare in the context of the ongoing Pandemic. Winter Plan 2020/2021 includes a targeted work programme to significantly expand the existing home support hours to support those with high and moderate levels of frailty including people with dementia, utilising a discharge to assess model with a philosophy of 'Home First' underpinning all care pathway decisions.

The Services for Older People Reform Programme, commenced in 2021 and to continue in 2022, includes the following work-streams: -

- Increased capacity in intermediate care beds
- Implementation of interRAI as a standardised clinical care needs assessment tool
- Increase of 5m hours of home support to include the development of a reablement model to be established in each CHO.

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