



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Pobail
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Office of the Assistant National Director –
Community Operations
Services for Older People

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14 April 2022

Deputy Pauline Tully TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 18152/21

To ask the Minister for Health if HSE homecare staff and staff working for companies providing homecare that are contracted by the HSE are fully equipped with personal protective equipment which will enable them to continue providing a service in cases in which a person with complex care needs or their family carer have tested positive for Covid-19; his views on whether such a service should continue to be provided when the staff are fully equipped with personal protective equipment; if the same work criteria are applied to HSE homecare staff and staff working for companies providing homecare that are contracted by the HSE as is applied to HSE hospital staff with regard to the provision of services to persons who have contracted Covid-19; 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.

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.

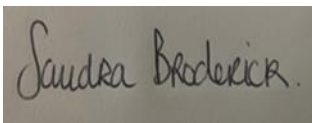
The COVID-19 vaccination rollout has been hugely successful nationally, with 95.1% of the population fully vaccinated with their first course of vaccination (two shots), and presently, the rollout of the booster programme is well underway, with just over 76% of the population vaccinated as of April 2022. In relation to directly employed HSE staff, the majority have received their full course of vaccination against COVID-19, with many having received their third booster dose.

Vaccination helps to keep our healthcare workers and the people they care for safe. The HSE continues to support staff who may not be eligible for vaccination for specific medical reasons or who have not yet accepted vaccination for other reasons. The opportunity to avail of vaccination remains available at any time to people who decide to accept vaccination.

The HSE is committed to keeping our staff and service users safe and has taken all necessary steps to ensure the mitigation of transmission of COVID-19 across our services. In addition to the protection afforded to staff and patients/clients through vaccination against COVID-19, PPE is also readily available to all healthcare workers, including Home Support staff. The HSE continues to provide PPE to all home support providers delivering service on behalf of the HSE to ensure that service continues to be provided to all clients regardless of COVID-19 status. Standard precautions including 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.

The HSE together with Approved Providers, continue to engage collaboratively to ensure the ongoing provision of home support services especially those clients with assessed high priority care needs.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Broderick".

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People