



15.12.2022

Deputy Brid Smith,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Smith,

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 59930/22

To ask the Minister for Health if a person who is in need of a carer to assist them in their home but who is unable to source any carer and lives in an island setting has any entitlement to additional supports from her Department in terms of accessing home help and so on; 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.

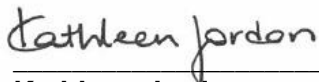
Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support, and its importance as an alternative service to long stay care, has grown considerably over the past number of years. Similarly, the type of Home Support that is now required to meet the needs of the population is a more person-centred personal care model.

The HSE is aware that there are increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. While there may be 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. The HSE continues to advertise on an ongoing basis for Health Care Support 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 Health Care Support Assistants, recruitment is normally conducted at a 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.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to note, that when a client is approved for Home Support, commencement of the service is dependent on carer capacity and funding being available for that service. Clients who are approved for a Home Support service, and where carers and/or funding is not readily available at that time, are placed on a waiting list until such time as either a carer or funding becomes available.

As outlined above, access to the current Home Support Service is based on an assessment of the person's needs, with no distinction being made or additional supports being put in place arising from the geographic location of the service user. The HSE will be linking with the DoH in early 2023 in the context of a cross governmental approach to Ireland's ageing population.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Kathleen Jordan
Head of Service – Home Support
Services for Older People
Community Operations