



15th February 2022

Deputy David Cullinane,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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 4557/21

To ask the Minister for Health the status of homecare waiting lists; the number of hours budgeted for compared to the hours that were provided in 2020 and 2021; the number budgeted for in 2022; the number of whole-time equivalents required to deliver the unspent hours from 2021; 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.

NSP 2022 provides for the following: -

- Rollover of the 2021 target levels of service into 2022, inclusive of the additional 5m hours funded in 2021 to 23.67m hours nationally
- 360,000 hours provided via Intensive Home Care Packages
- 230,000 hours associated with the roll-out of the pilot Statutory Home Support Scheme, which commenced in late 2021

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 December 2021. As of this date, 20,463,216 Home Support hours were delivered nationally to 55,043 people, representing a target achievement of 87% by year end. In relation to providing an estimate of the number of whole time equivalent Home Support staff required to deliver the shortfall, this would be in the region of 500 additional whole time equivalent Home Support staff nationally.

Also, as at end of December 2021, there were 474 people assessed waiting for funding for new or additional Home Support and a further 5,322 people were assessed and approved for Home Support but 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 14% based on activity levels for the same period 2020. Please see Appendix 1 below for a breakdown of data requested.

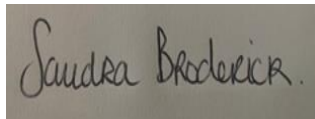
The HSE is aware that there are increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. The HSE continues to advertise on an ongoing basis for Health Care Assistants (HCSAs) and recruits as many suitable candidates, where possible. The HSE conducts its recruitment through a variety 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.

Work is underway 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 recently 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,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Broderick".

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People



Appendix 1 – Home Support Service Provision – 2020 & 2021

CHO	Full Year	SERVICE PROVISION 2021			WAITING LIST 2021			SERVICE PROVISION 2020			WAITING LIST 2020		
	Target 2022	Target 2021	Hours 2021	% Variance	Total	Funding	Carers	Target 2020	Hours 2020	% Variance	Total	Funding	Carers
CHO1	2,303,480	2,346,320	2,007,795	-14%	431	66	365	1,791,320	1,682,740	-6%	206	-	206
CHO2	2,509,450	2,552,320	2,331,668	-9%	698	-	698	2,053,320	2,039,074	-1%	101	100	1
CHO3	1,890,000	1,918,520	1,714,615	-11%	575	52	523	1,546,320	1,412,975	-9%	509	255	254
CHO4	3,519,300	3,562,200	2,827,151	-21%	797	1	796	2,823,200	2,721,569	-4%	687	3	684
CHO5	2,639,310	2,696,460	1,908,419	-29%	1,521	-	1,521	2,033,460	1,839,284	-10%	1,354	525	829
CHO6	1,989,970	1,988,780	1,915,971	-4%	163	-	163	1,436,780	1,413,823	-2%	138	-	138
CHO7	2,857,640	2,900,500	2,310,477	-20%	1,000	282	718	2,173,500	2,013,320	-7%	1,627	1,208	419
CHO8	2,377,460	2,420,320	2,115,276	-13%	472	8	464	1,791,320	1,695,169	-5%	406	207	199
CHO9	3,583,390	3,284,580	3,331,843	1%	139	65	74	3,020,780	2,736,926	-9%	126	120	6
Total	23,670,000	23,670,000	20,463,216	-13.5%	5,796	474	5,322	18,670,000	17,554,880	-6%	5,154	2,418	2,736