



02 February 2022

**Deputy Roisin Shorthall TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Shorthall,

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 2463/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on a waiting list for homecare packages; the number of persons experiencing delayed discharge from hospital due to a delay accessing homecare; and the waiting lists for homecare packages by CHO and LHO in tabular form.

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, while 21,164 new Home Support clients have benefitted from the service. As of this date, there were 474 people assessed and waiting for funding approval for new or additional home support, while 5,322 people were assessed and approved for Home Support but awaiting a carer to be assigned. Please see Appendix 1 below for a breakdown of the current Home Support waiting list, as at end of December 2021.

In relation to delayed transfers of care (DTOC), the latest report available dated 25th January 2022, shows that there were 70 people nationally who were assessed and waiting for a carer to be assigned in advance of discharge.



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 last year.

The HSE is aware of 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 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.

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. This includes work within the Department of Health to establish a Strategic Workforce Advisory Group with 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 handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Sandra Tuohy'.

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People



Appendix 1 – Home Support Waiting List – December 2021

		WAITING LIST	
		Funding	Carers
CHO	LHO	Total	Total
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan	-	222
CHO 1	Donegal	66	85
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim	-	58
CHO 1	Total	66	365
CHO 2	Galway	-	278
CHO 2	Mayo	-	293
CHO 2	Roscommon	-	127
CHO 2	Total	-	698
CHO 3	Clare	52	205
CHO 3	Limerick	-	180
CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	-	138
CHO 3	Total	52	523
CHO 4	Kerry	1	208
CHO 4	North Cork	-	105
CHO 4	North Lee	-	120
CHO 4	South Lee	-	249
CHO 4	West Cork	-	114
CHO 4	Total	1	796
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	-	135
CHO 5	South Tipperary	-	198
CHO 5	Waterford	-	317
CHO 5	Wexford	-	871
CHO 5	Total	-	1,521
CHO 6	Dublin South East	-	-
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire	-	132
CHO 6	Wicklow	-	31
CHO 6	Total	-	163
CHO 7	Dublin South City	47	130
CHO 7	Dublin South West	107	274
CHO 7	Dublin West	48	201
CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow	80	113
CHO 7	Total	282	718
CHO 8	Laois Offaly	8	-
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath	-	113
CHO 8	Louth	-	147
CHO 8	Meath	-	204
CHO 8	Total	8	464
CHO 9	Dublin North	13	74
CHO 9	Dublin North Central	29	-
CHO 9	Dublin North West	23	-
CHO 9	Total	65	74
National Total		474	5,322