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02 February 2022

**Deputy Catherine Murphy TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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 63103/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons awaiting palliative care homecare hours by CHO area and by the length of time they are waiting for same in tabular form showing the number of patients awaiting allocation of actual delivery of homecare in increments of six months; 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, while 21,164 new Home Support clients have benefitted from the service. Also, as of this date, there were 474 people assessed and waiting for funding for new or additional home support, while 5,333 people were assessed and approved for Home Support but are 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 last year.

Please note that data requested for palliative care homecare hours and length of time on the waiting list is not currently collated nationally. While this information may be available locally, it would take considerable resources to collate this nationally.

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". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small underline under the first name.

Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People