



02 February 2022

**Deputy Michael Healy-Rae TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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 63338/21

To ask the Minister for Health the reason the HSE national office is insisting that a service (details supplied) operates in the same way as the HSE; 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.

The HSE is committed to the direct employment of home support staff for those with the appropriate skill set. However, private providers are part of the landscape for home support provision and will continue to be used, not least for the choice of care which they allow to the user of the service.

In that regard, following a tender process in 2018, each of the nine Community Health Organisations across the country have a number of Approved Providers available to provide a Home Support service to clients locally where the HSE is not in a position to provide the service directly. External providers operate subject to tender arrangements with the HSE and are paid in accordance with agreed tender rates. The current tender has been extended for a further 12-month period to end December 2022. The operation of the tender is detailed in the Tender 2018 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) available at the following web-link:-

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/service-arrangement-documents.html>

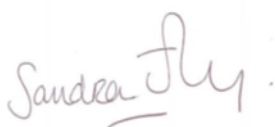
Approved Providers with formal tender arrangements with the HSE; are required to comply with a set of Service Specifications that cover a range of requirements including e.g. governance arrangements, recruitment and staff supervision, complaints management, health and safety etc. Each provider must have the relevant policies in place pertaining to each Service Specification and these must be available for inspection at all times by the HSE. Each CHO area regularly undertake performance monitoring and/or audits of Approved Providers to ensure compliance with Service Arrangements and service specifications. Further detailed information relating to the current Tender Service Specifications for Approved Providers can be found here;

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/service-specifications-home-support-services-2018.pdf>

In November 2021, following a number of consultations, Homecare Direct informed the HSE of their intention to formally withdraw from the provision of home support services funded from Older Persons Services. All home support clients and/or family member have been contacted, where applicable, and alternative arrangements have, or are in the process of being put in place to ensure continued service delivery to those affected clients.

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,



Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People