



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Pobail
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Office of the Assistant National Director –
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Services for Older People

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25th July 2022

Deputy Reada Cronin TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Cronin,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which were submitted to this Department for response.

PQ: 37524/22

To ask the Minister for Health if those persons who have been sanctioned carer hours through care at home could go ahead and source a carer from a separate source, the HSE funding the hours that are sanctioned given the current personnel shortage notified; 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 competing demands for the services from those people with assessed needs.

NSP 2022 provides for the overall delivery of 24.26m hours nationally by year end. Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to end of June 2022. As of this date, 10,568,906 Home Support hours were delivered nationally to 56,018 people. 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 fully cognisant of increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. 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. As at end of May 2022 (latest available data) there were 5,267 Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed with the HSE nationally.

The HSE has also commenced scoping out the use of personalised budgets as an alternative to the current model of home support service delivery. However, considerations such as governance, adherence to standards, employee/employer relationship, financial oversight, potential legislative impact etc. will need to be need to be addressed prior to the introduction of any formal policy on the use of personalised home support budgets.

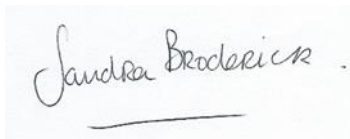
Another option which is available to Home Support clients is that of Consumer Directed Home Support (CDHS). It is an option for persons' who apply for Home Support and who wish to have more control

and choice over their care delivery in keeping with the principles of empowerment and autonomy inherent in person-centred care. When a client is approved for a Home Support Service and HSE staff are not available to deliver the service, then an external provider, who has been approved by the HSE under Tender 2018 Arrangements, may deliver the service on their behalf. The CDHS approach facilitates clients to deal directly with HSE Approved Provider(s) of their choice and to arrange days and times of service delivery. Further information on Consumer Directed Home Support can be found at the following link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/national-guidelines-and-procedures-for-the-standardised-implementation-of-the-home-support-service-hss-guidelines.pdf>

However, 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.

A joint work programme between the Department of Health and HSE, for the design and development of the new statutory Home Support scheme and regulation, is underway with the Department of Health leading out on the detailed process to determine what type of Home Support scheme is best to meet the ongoing and evolving needs of our older people. 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 black ink that reads "Sandra Broderick". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People