



**27<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Deputy Duncan Smith,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Smith,**

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

**PQ: 22/38339**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of homecare and home help hours that were funded in 2021 and 2022; respectively; and the amount that was not utilised due to staffing shortages; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ: 22/38338**

**To ask the Minister for Health the funding provided for the home support service in 2022, the number of homecare packages funded; the projected additional cost of providing a homecare package to each identified case in 2023; 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 2021 provided for the overall delivery of 24.26m hours nationally by year end. In 2022, the target hours have remained at 24.26m hours. 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. Also, as of this date, there were 230 people assessed and waiting for funding for new or additional home support, while 5,240 people were assessed and approved for Home Support but are awaiting a carer to be assigned.

In relation to your query on the projected cost of providing a Home Support service to each identified case, and basing same on the current Waiting List levels as at end of June 2022, the approximate additional full year cost of same in 2023 would be in the region of €56.2m. This is based on the average cost per hour and an average of 7.5 hours provide per client per week.

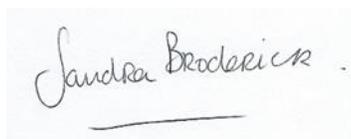
The HSE is cognisant of increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. The HSE continues to advertise on an ongoing basis for Health Care Support Assistants (HCSAs) and recruits as many suitable candidates, where possible. The HSE conducts its recruitment through a variety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

In relation to Home Support hours not delivered in 2021 due to staffing shortages, approximately 40k hours per week nationally were not being delivered. This is based on the waiting list levels in respect of approved clients waiting on a carer to be assigned, as at the end of December 2021 (5,322), and taking into account the average number of Home Support hours per client per week. In respect of 2022, this reduces to approximately 39k hours per week nationally. This applies across both direct and indirect provision.

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 the establishment of the cross-departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group, led by Department of Health, to work with key stakeholders (including the HSE) to examine in detail at issues of recruitment, retention, skills development, pay and conditions, and sustainable employment of home support workers into the future.

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 a detailed process to determine the future model of service delivery in Ireland, to reform how we meet the ongoing and evolving care needs of eligible adults 18 and over. 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 cursive script that reads "Sandra Broderick". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

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**Sandra Broderick**  
Assistant National Director  
Community Operations  
Services for Older People