



27th July 2022

Deputy Rose Conway Walsh,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Conway Walsh,

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: 22/39380

To ask the Minister for Health the number of HSE home help staff recruited in the past 12 months per county in tabular form; 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.

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.

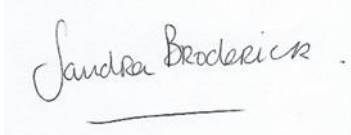
Recruitment and retention of home support staff for both direct and indirect service provision remains a significant challenge leading to capacity issues across the Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs). The HSE continues to advertise on an ongoing basis for Health Care Support Assistants (HCSAs) 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 data requested in relation to the number of HSE home support staff recruited in the past 12 months per county, is not presently available nationally. Data is available however for the period January to May 2022 and the CHOs have indicated that 237 HCSAs were recruited nationally in the period January to May 2022 with panels in place where candidates are being processed for appointment. There are presently 20 active recruitment campaigns occurring nationally, with another 18 planned over the next three months across various CHOs. A number of the CHOs have ongoing rolling recruitment campaigns in place to maximise the recruitment of HCSAs.

The HSE is working closely with the Department of Health and 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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Sandra Broderick", with a horizontal line underneath.

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People