



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Pobail
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Office of the Assistant National Director –
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19th August 2022

Deputy Michael Ring,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Ring,

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: 22/40530

To ask the Minister for Health the position regarding the employment of healthcare support assistants by the HSE (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael Ring

Why when the HSE are recruiting Health Care Support Assistants applicants are expected to complete all modules of Level 8, yet these same applicants can work for the HSE through a contracted private company/agency without completing all the modules? If the person cannot apply to work directly for the HSE, why are the HSE contracting them indirectly?

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 overall delivery of 24.26m hours nationally by year end. Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to end of July 2022. As of this date, 12,432,029 Home Support hours were delivered nationally to 56,284 people. This represents a 7.8% increase in the number of hours delivered when compared to the same period last year.

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.

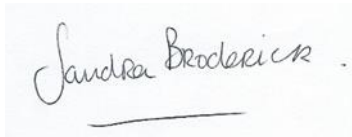
Home Support services are provided by both directly employed Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) and Approved Providers with formal tendered arrangements with the HSE and while the HSE is committed to the direct employment of home support staff for those with the appropriate skill set, private providers 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. The current training requirements for both directly employed HCSAs and those employed by tendered private providers, involve completion of the appropriate and relevant modules of a FETAC Level 5 qualification in Healthcare, to include Care of the Elderly, Care Skills, Infection & Prevention Control etc. The Home Support Tender Service Specifications detail the minimum requirements of staff employed by external agencies providing services under tender arrangements – available at the following web-link: -

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

At present, there is no Level 8 qualification specific to Home Support as the service is not a clinical service. Other related Level 8 qualifications would be clinical in nature, such as nursing and other health allied health professional related clinical fields.

Significant work is underway to address current carer capacity 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 black ink that reads "Sandra Broderick". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People