



28 June 2022

Deputy David Cullinane TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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 29909/22

To ask the Minister for Health the funding allocated to home help hours; the underspend in 2021; the additional allocation for 2022; and the expected underspend in 2022.

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.

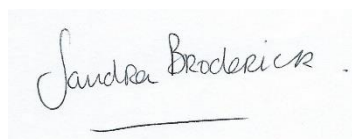
With significant additional funding the target hours for home support increased from 19.26m hours in 2020 to 24.26m hours in 2021, rolled over into 2022, an increase of 26%. As at end December 2021, the HSE provided 20,463,216 hours of home support and despite the challenges faced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HSE has continued, insofar as possible, to deliver Home Support services to those who need it most.

This is evident in the activity levels May 2022 YTD when compared to the same period last year. Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to end of May 2022. As of this date, 8,729,640 Home Support hours were delivered nationally, an increase of 9.1% versus SPLY .

The current activity levels are also encouraging given the ongoing carer capacity issues being faced nationally, to which the HSE is working closely with the Department of Health on and significant work is underway to address these challenges. The Department of Health have established a cross-departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group including the HSE to work with key stakeholders to examine in detail at issues of recruitment, retention, skills development, pay and conditions, and sustainable employment of home support workers into the future.

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,

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