



30th June 2022

**Deputy Róisín Shortall,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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: 22/31337

To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the introduction of the homecare-based policies in Sláintecare; if these policies will be supported by the HSE's process of tendering for service provision; 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.

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.

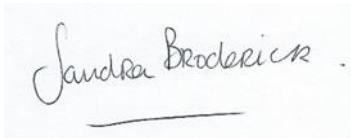
One of the key strategic intents of Sláintecare is to transform community services through a modernisation of the health care system, shifting care out of the acute hospital system and into primary and community settings. This will see enhanced provision of care and support to older persons and persons of increasing frailty in their homes, where appropriate. The aim of Sláintecare is to deliver a universal health service that offers the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

In recognition that Home Support is a key service within the Irish healthcare system, a joint work programme between the Department of Health and HSE for the design, development and regulation of the new statutory home support scheme is currently underway with the Department of Health leading out on a detailed process to determine what type of scheme is best to meet the ongoing and evolving needs of our older people. Part of this process is to test a new model of Home Support delivery, and this is presently underway in four pilot sites across the country. This pilot programme will be entering the evaluation stage in Q3 2022, and once completed, the outcomes will inform the overall design of the new statutory Home Support Scheme. Draft Regulations for Providers of Home Support Services were published by the Department of Health mid-June for public consultation with HIQA's Standards for Home Care and Support Services also due to issue for public consultation in the coming months.

It is envisaged that the statutory Home Support Scheme will be implemented until into 2023 therefore there is a requirement to ensure the availability of providers beyond the end date of the current tender arrangements, i.e. 31st December 2022.

In relation to the new interim HS Tender 2023, the HSE is now at the strategy development stage for the next iteration of the tender process and the HSE has engaged a third party to reach out to a broad spectrum of providers on its behalf to help to inform the procurement strategy for the contracts that will be in place for 2023. Service standards and value for money will be addressed in the tender, as they have been in previous tenders. It is anticipated that the Invitation to Tender will issue towards the end of Q3 for implementation on 1 January 2023.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Broderick". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background. Below the signature, there is a short horizontal line.

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People