



07 April 2022

Deputy Clare Kerran TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Kerran,

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 15608/22

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the difficulties being experienced by homecare workers as regards mileage costs for travelling as part of their work; 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 care needs by the HSE and having regard to available resources and competing demands for the service from those people with assessed needs.

Home Support Services are an important component of the provision of service to older people with assessed needs and to support them in their choice of living in their own home and community. The HSE, working within its available resources, has sought to maintain and when possible to expand the range and volume of services available to support people to remain in their own homes, to prevent early admission to long term residential care and to support people to return to their homes following an acute hospital admission.

Home Support Services for older people are provided either by directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. The type of support provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties relating to the client's assessed needs.

Directly employed Health Care Support Assistants who are required to travel in the delivery of home support services are entitled to be paid the relevant travel and subsistence rates as agreed with the Department of Health and in accordance with HSE's National Financial Regulations (NFR 05 Travel & Subsistence). Mileage claimed is dependent on location/base and spread of clients within a geographical area and staff are assigned in such a way as to minimise the amount the travel in so far as possible.

In relation to the use of private providers, the HSE has committed to the direct employment of home support staff to maximum effect for those with the appropriate skill set. However, 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.

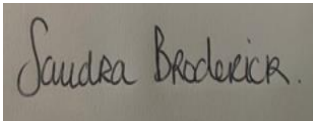
In that regard, following a tender process in 2018, each of the nine Community Health Organisations across the country have a number of Approved Providers available to provide a Home Support Service to clients locally where the HSE is not in a position to provide the service directly. External providers

operate subject to tender arrangements with the HSE and are paid in accordance with agreed tender rates.

The terms and conditions of Home Support Workers employed by the Approved Providers are a matter for each employer. The criteria for payment of travel costs associated with home support services through external provision is detailed in the Tender 2018 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) available at the following web-link:-

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/service-arrangement-documents.html>

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Broderick".

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People