



29th September 2022

Deputy Roisin Shortall TD,
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 44660/22

To ask the Minister for Health if a comprehensive analysis has been conducted of the estimated cost of the HSE providing homecare directly to care recipients on an hourly basis; if so, if he will provide this analysis; the estimated equivalent cost to the HSE and providers of providing such care on an out-sourced basis; 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 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.

The development of this new service model grounded in the National Standards for Better Safer Healthcare and sufficiently flexible to meet the more complex needs of an aging population brings with it challenges of ensuring that all providers, including HSE directly provided services, are in a position to deliver a quality service and one in which the workforce is trained and competent to undertake the required duties.

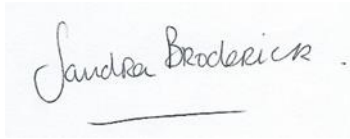
The Sláintecare vision is to achieve a universal single-tier health and social care system where everyone has equal access to services based on need, and not ability to pay. Since its initial inception, following the publication of the Sláintecare Report in May 2017 and the subsequent approval of the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy in July 2018, significant additional funding has been provided to the HSE to further deliver essential home support services to those most in need in our communities.

Since 2015, there has been a 118% increase in funding provision for Home Support Services with funding in 2022 at circa. €666.5m. (Please note that these figures exclude any provision relating to the ongoing Public Health emergency). Please note that the HSE does not allocate a specific budget in respect of indirect service provision. This is due to the HSE operating a formal tender process, a feature of which is varying levels of pricing across all approved tendered providers and service is commissioned from external providers for new clients and increases in service provision for existing clients in accordance with the Tender Standard Operating Procedure, where HSE direct services are not available.

The increase in funding supports have provided for an increase in service delivery, together with the streamlining of home support services and the proposed pilot Home Support Scheme relating to preparation for the legislation and regulation of Home Support Services. The Department of Health is presently leading out on the development of a statutory Home Support Service which will consider the future design of both the funding and regulation systems for these essential services.

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 cursive script that reads "Sandra Broderick". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Sandra Broderick
Assistant National Director
Community Operations
Services for Older People