



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta  
Oibríochtaí Pobail  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Office of the Assistant National Director –  
Community Operations  
Services for Older People

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20<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Deputy Eamon O’Cuiv TD,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy O’Cuiv,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which were submitted to this Department for response.

**PQ: 46968/22**

**To ask the Minister for Health the steps and arrangements that are being put in place to recruit staff members for homecare packages and homecare hours to ensure that eligible persons are in receipt of their allocation as awarded when medically assessed; if consideration will be given to providing eligible persons with financial assistance in order to source a carer to provide home help when there are no home support care assistants available in the area to provide care; 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 overall delivery of 24.26m hours nationally by year end. Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to end of August 2022. As of this date, 14,250,532 Home Support hours were delivered nationally to 56,350 people. Also, as of this date, there were 56 people assessed and waiting for funding for new or additional home support, while 6,035 people were assessed and approved for Home Support but are awaiting a carer to be assigned.

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 HSE is fully cognisant of increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. The HSE continues to advertise on an ongoing basis for Health Care Support Assistants (HCSAs) and recruits as many suitable candidates, where possible. The HSE conducts its recruitment through a variety of channels both at local level and through the shared service offices of HBS. Due to the nature of Health Care Support Assistants, recruitment is normally conducted at a local level and is on-going continually across the HSE in an effort to ensure availability of carers. As at end of July 2022 (latest available data) there were 5,289 Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed with the HSE nationally.

An option which is available to Home Support clients is that of Consumer Directed Home Support (CDHS). It is an option for persons' who apply for Home Support and who wish to have more control and choice over their care delivery in keeping with the principles of empowerment and autonomy inherent in person-centred care. When a client is approved for a Home Support Service and HSE staff are not available to deliver the service, then an external provider, who has been approved by the HSE under Tender 2018 Arrangements, may deliver the service on their behalf. The CDHS approach facilitates clients to deal directly with HSE Approved Provider(s) of their choice and to arrange days and times of service delivery. Further information on Consumer Directed Home Support can be found at the following link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/national-guidelines-and-procedures-for-the-standardised-implementation-of-the-home-support-service-hss-guidelines.pdf>

A joint work programme between the Department of Health and HSE, for the design and development of the new statutory Home Support scheme and regulation, is underway with the Department of Health leading out on the detailed process to determine what type of Home Support scheme is best to meet the ongoing and evolving needs of our older people. 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 dark ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

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**Kathleen Jordan**  
General Manager  
Services for Older People  
Community Operations