

Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta  
Oibríochtaí Pobail  
Seirbhísi do Dhaoine Aosta  
Teileafón: 087 345 5593  
Ríomhphost: olderpeople.operations@hse.ie



Office of the Assistant National Director  
Community Operations  
Services for Older People  
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**04 May 2023**

**Patricia Ryan,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Ryan,**

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 18668/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health how many people who have been granted funding are on waiting lists for a carer; 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 an assessment of the person's needs by the HSE, having regard to the available resources and the competing demands of the service. The volume and type of service provided to each client is based on individually assessed care needs and will vary dependent on the needs identified and the resources available to meet those needs.

Demand for home support continues to increase due to population growth and the increasing dependency of the growing numbers of people aged  $\geq 80$  years, within the over 65 years' cohort. In the context of increasing demand, priority is given to those being discharged from acute hospitals who are in a position to return home with supports and to those in the community with acute needs. Funding approval is expedited across the system to ensure minimum waiting times. While there may be delays between the approval of funding and the availability of carers to commence delivery of home support hours in certain regions, significant work is underway to address these challenges

Recruitment and retention of Home Support staff for both direct and indirect service provision remains a significant challenge leading to capacity issues across the Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs). As at end of February 2023 (latest available data), there were 5,294 Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed with the HSE nationally.

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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 HSE's National Recruitment Service (NRS). 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.

The Strategic Workforce Advisory Group on Home Carers & Nursing Home Healthcare Assistants published their report on 15th October, 2022. This report sets out a number of recommendations through which the current workforce crisis in Healthcare Assistants (and Home Support staff) could be addressed at a cross governmental level. Further discussions are to be held with the Department of Health on the phased implementation of the recommendations assigned to the HSE for delivery and the associated funding implications.

Available waiting list data reflects those that have been assessed and waiting for care staff for the provision of Home Support. The national point in time position as at the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023 for the requested information is 6,432.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan".

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**Kathleen Jordan**  
**Head of Service – Home Support**  
**Services for Older People**  
**Community Operation**