



1<sup>st</sup> March 2023

Deputy Denis Naughten,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Naughten,

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

**PQ 7633\23**

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will make provision for the allocation of funds to be made available directly to families to allow them to source the care required given the failure by the HSE to deliver home help hours due to the lack of availability of staff; 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. Latest available activity reflects the December 2022 position where 20,792,772 Home Support hours were delivered nationally to 56,162 people, with 20,056 new Home Support clients commencing a new service in 2022.

The HSE is fully cognisant of increasing capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. Notwithstanding the significant level of service provision and the improved activity levels when compared to the December 2021 position, the impact of increased demand for Home Support coupled with the carer availability issue has resulted in waiting lists becoming a feature of the service. December 2022 waiting list showing that 7 people were assessed and waiting for funding for home support and, 6,673 people were recorded as waiting on care staff. In terms of those waiting, priority is given to those in the community with acute needs and to those assessed and waiting in acute hospitals, who are in a position to return home with supports. Funding approval for Home Support for those assessed as requiring same is expedited across the system to ensure minimum waiting times.

Significant work is underway by the HSE to address these challenges. 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. Approved Home Support Providers also continue to recruit Home Support workers.

The DoH 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.

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. CDHS was introduced in 2018, and was included as part of the Tender Framework Arrangements that commenced on 01 September 2018. 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, will deliver the service on their behalf. The CDHS approach facilitates suitable 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 is available 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>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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