

17<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Deputy Thomas Gould, T.D.,  
 Dáil Éireann  
 Dublin 2

**PQ ref 34107/23:**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the average wait time for the fair deal application processing in Cork currently".**

**PQ ref 34108/23**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the number of staff currently employed in the fair deal section of Cork Kerry Community Healthcare by role, in tabular form".**

**PQ ref 34109/23**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the number of applications received in Cork for the fair deal scheme by month to date in 2023".**

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The Nursing Home Support Scheme (NHSS), often also referred to as 'Fair Deal', is a system of financial support for people who require long-term residential care. The primary legislation underpinning the NHSS is the Nursing Home Support Scheme Act 2009. Participants in the NHSS contribute to the cost of their care according to their means while the State pays the balance of the cost. The Scheme aims to ensure that long-term nursing home care is accessible and affordable for everyone, and that people are cared for in the most appropriate settings.

The NHSS is managed by the National Office in Tullamore and is supported by 17 local HSE Nursing Homes Support Offices (NHSOs). Each NHSO is responsible for processing applications and completing monthly administration activities for their region's clients / nursing homes.

NHSS applications in this region are managed by the Cork/Kerry Nursing Homes Support Office. With regard to **PQ reference 34107/23**, the current staffing complement for this NHSO is set out in *Table 1* below:

<b>Table 1: NHSO Cork/Kerry - Current Staff</b>	<b>2023 WTE</b>
Manager (Grade VIII)	1
Grade VI	1
Grade V	1
Grade III	5.8
Nurse Assessors	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.6</b>

*Note:* In relation to the above table, we are currently recruiting for two vacant posts.

In relation to **PQ 34108/23** regarding average wait time for Nursing Home Support Scheme/Fair Deal application processing by Cork/Kerry NHSO, it should be noted that delays do occur in the process where applicants do not submit all of the relevant information and/or documentation required to finalise and complete the application process. Notwithstanding such delays, *Table 2* below sets out the average wait time between application received date and application decision date over the last four quarters:

<b>Table 2: Cork Kerry Nursing Homes Support Office</b>	<b>Average Time Elapsed between Application Received Date and Application Decision Date</b>
<b>Q3 2022</b>	47 days
<b>Q4 2022</b>	38 days
<b>Q1 2023</b>	33 days
<b>Q2 2023</b>	22 days

Depending on the level of complexity of the individual case, processing of an application may take longer in some instances. For example, in cases where ancillary State support is sought, additional factors may impact on the timeframe, e.g. the HSE must establish title of a property before a decision can be made and establishing title can be a lengthy process in some cases.

*Table 3* below illustrates the number of NHSS applications received by Cork/Kerry NHSO by month to May 31st 2023 as requested in **PQ 34109/23**:

<b>Table 3: NHSO applications received by month to date in 2023</b>	<b>Total (To May 2023)</b>
January	171
February	157
March	185
April	138
May	148
<b>Total (to end of May 2023)</b>	<b>799</b>
<b>Extrapolated Full Year – 2023</b>	<b>1931</b>
<b>Projected 2023 % Increase on 2022 activity</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Projected 2023 % Increase on 2021 activity</b>	<b>35%</b>

Funding for the scheme is issued to applicants in chronological order by the date of determination of their application. This ensures equity nationally. Funding is currently being released by the HSE on a weekly basis.

It can be seen from the tables above that the average processing time between receipt of application and application decision date has been reducing. Furthermore, Cork/Kerry NHSO is currently ranked among the top three offices in the country in terms of average processing time.

There is broad agreement across sectors that the Nursing Home Support Scheme operates well and continues to provide appropriate financial assistance where it is required. Demographic factors are likely to continue to drive NHSO activity levels both nationally and locally and CKCH is committed to ensuring that Cork/Kerry NHSO maintains and enhances efficiency levels.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



-----  
 Jackie Daly  
 Head of Service for Older People

