

25<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 35505/23**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the number of new applications for home help that were approved but not allocated due to financial constraints in the south and north Lee areas in County Cork in each of the past twelve months, in tabular form”.**

**PQ ref 35506/23**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the waiting list for home help in south Lee, Cork”.**

**PQ ref 35507/23**

**“To ask the Minister for Health whether all home help organiser positions in south Lee and north Lee have been filled; and if not, when they will be filled”.**

Dear Deputy Ó Laoghaire,

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.

Provision of Home Support is a core service for older people and their families and is an essential service for thousands of people across the country. It is highly valued by service users and their families because it enables older people to live independently and with dignity in their own homes for longer. It also enables many older people to return home following acute hospital admission. For these reasons, improving access to this service is a Government and HSE priority.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare continues to work towards increasing Home Support provision across the region; however, difficulties have been experienced in relation to recruitment and retention of staff with certain areas experiencing increased pressures. Approved private providers, who work with the HSE in fulfilling Home Support service requests, are experiencing similar staffing issues.

Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support continues to grow as the population aged over 65 years increases. If Home Support staff (HSE or private providers) are not available to deliver support, then the request for a home support service is waitlisted. Those people who are on the waiting list have been clinically assessed and are reviewed, as staffing resources become available, to ensure that individual cases continue to be dealt with on a priority basis within the available staffing, having regard to the client’s assessed needs. Referrals are prioritised depending on their care needs. Many clients receive a service within days of approval but others are placed on a wait list, due to non-availability of carers.

With regard to **PQ 35505/23**, none of our waitlisted clients in the South Lee and North Lee areas or in the wider CHO region are awaiting funding approval or waitlisted due to financial constraints; the only reason for the delay in allocating their service is carer availability. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is making every effort to recruit

additional home support staff in a challenging recruitment environment. However, delivering enhanced capacity requires substantial recruitment and strategic workforce challenges are in evidence in the sector.

In response to **PQ 35506/23**, there are **909** clients currently awaiting allocation of new or additional home support in the South Lee area. When new staff are recruited, they are prioritised for areas where the demand is greatest. In an effort to mitigate waiting lists and increase service allocation, two specialist Health Care Support Assistant recruitment officers have been appointed within CKCH and they have run extensive recruitment and advertising campaigns over the last 18 months. In 2022, a total of 125 HCSAs were recruited into the home support service through these ongoing recruitment campaigns. However, a total of 144 HCSAs resigned or retired in 2022. To date, in the past twelve months, 152 new HCSAs have commenced employment with the home support service across this CHO following successful recruitment efforts and these efforts will continue.

In relation to **PQ 35507/23** regarding Home Support Resource Manager (HSRM) positions in South Lee and North Lee, there are currently **2** vacant HSRM posts in these areas. A recruitment campaign to fill these posts recently completed and interviews are scheduled to take place over two days during the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> July. In general it takes eight to ten weeks from date of interview for a successful candidate to commence in their post which would indicate a start date of early/mid-October.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is acutely aware that there are capacity issues across both direct and indirect provision of Home Support throughout the region. Our population is growing and it is also ageing and this means that demand for home support services is projected to increase substantially. Improving access to home support is a service priority for Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and, to this end, we continue to advertise on an on-going basis for staff in a concerted effort to recruit as many suitable candidates as possible to fulfil our service requirements.

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

Yours sincerely,



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Jackie Daly  
Head of Service for Older People

