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Oibríochtaí Pobail  
Seirbhísi do Dhaoine Aosta  
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Office of the Assistant National Director  
Community Operations  
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4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Deputy Brid Smith,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Smith,

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 13225/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health if this HSE-mandated training for home helps is mandatory for all persons working as home helps in private companies; if this training is exclusively online; if workers taking this training do so as part of their working day; if the HSE requires private companies who employ these workers, to pay them for the hours spent doing this training; if the HSE that contracts these companies to provide home help hours, has set any minimum number of hours to be worked by their employees; 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 Service.

Home Support services for older people are provided either by HSE directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. The type of support provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties relating to the client's assessed needs.

In relation to indirect service provision, following a tender process in 2018, each of the nine Community Health Organisations across the country have a number of Approved Providers available to provide a Home Support service to clients locally where the HSE is not in a position to provide the service directly. External providers operate subject to tender arrangements as outlined in the Home Support Services for Older People Tender 2018 Service Specification which can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/service-specifications-home-support-services-2018.pdf>

The terms and conditions of Home Support Workers employed by the Approved Providers are a matter for each employer. In terms of HSE requirements, Specifications 14 and 17 of the aforementioned Tender 2018 Service Specification sets out staff training and development requirements and these can be located under Theme 5 and Theme 6 on accessing the above link (Pages 20 -28). Providers are required to report on a quarterly basis to the HSE on certain Key Performance Indicators with Training and Qualifications featuring in the reporting requirement. The relevant template can be located on Page 39.

Additional information on the procedure relevant to the implementation of the Service Arrangements under Tender 2018 can be found in the Home Support Service Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and this can be located using the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/home-support-service-for-older-people-standard-operating-procedure-tender-2018.pdf>

Tender 2018 is due to expire in 2023 and to ensure continuity of indirect service provision, the HSE published Stage One of its Invitation to Participate on eTenders (<https://www.etenders.gov.ie/>) on 01 September 2022 with a submission deadline of 26th of September. Stage One of the process has been completed with the outcomes communicated to the relevant parties. Significant progress has been made in finalising Stage Two of the process which it is intended to publish in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



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