



06<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Deputy Robert Troy,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Troy,

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: 23/14567**

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide in tabular form in each CHO region the current number of home helps employed; the nuance of vacancies; if there are plans to hire additional numbers; and his views on the optimal number to be employed in this critical service.**

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.

Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support, and its importance as an alternative service to long stay care, has grown considerably over the past number of years. Similarly, the type of Home Support that is now required to meet the needs of the population is a more person-centred personal care model.

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). 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.

For reference CHO6 and CHO9 do not have a direct Home Support service in place, however, they provide services via approved Home Support service providers, as part of agreed Tender arrangements with the split of direct/indirect service provision varying across the remaining CHOs.

Appendix 1 - Provides a breakdown of the number of Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed at the point in time date of the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023 (most recent available data). As at end of February 2023 (latest available data), there were 5,294 Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed with the HSE nationally.

The overall Home Support resource and the range of approved providers, including HSE directly employed staff, is carefully managed by the local Home Support Management Team within each Community Healthcare Organisation,

to ensure that this key service is available at the required times, in a flexible way and at the appropriate standard to support clients' assessed needs.

With regard to staffing requirement, to deliver NSP target hours of 24.26m would require a workforce of circa 12,000 full time WTEs across the service.

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.

Yours sincerely,

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

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

Appendix 1 - Healthcare Support Assistants employed at the point in time date of the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023 (most recent available data)

	HCSA
LHO	Headcount
CHO1 Total	947
CHO2 Total	521
CHO3 Total	505
CHO4 Total	1,538
CHO5 Total	895
CHO6 Total	-
CHO7 Total	235
CHO8 Total	653
CHO9 Total	-
	5,294