



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta  
Oibríochtaí Pobail  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Office of the Assistant National Director –  
Community Operations  
Services for Older People

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26<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**Deputy Rose Conway Walsh,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Conway Walsh,**

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: 23/21158**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of home help staff employed directly in the public sector each year since 2001, in tabular form.**

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. Rolling recruitment campaigns are undertaken across the HSE in an effort to ensure availability of carers.

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.

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.

Appendix 1 - Provides a breakdown of the number of Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed at December 2001 – December 2022.

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**

Appendix 1 - Provides a breakdown of the number of Healthcare Support Assistants (HCSAs) employed at December 2001 – December 2022.

### HSE Direct - Homehelp / Health Care Support Assistants

Health Care Support Assistants (formerly Home Helps) Community Healthcare Organisation	Headcount	Dec-01	Dec-02	Dec-03	Dec-04	Dec-05	Dec-06	Dec-07	Dec-08
Total Directly Employed Home Helps / HCSAs	Headcount	8,562	8,760	6,990	6,273	5,108	9,648	12,343	11,804

### HSE Direct - Homehelp / Health Care Support Assistants

Health Care Support Assistants (formerly Home Helps) Community Healthcare Organisation	Headcount	Dec-09	Dec-10	Dec-11	Dec-12	Dec-13	Dec-14	Dec-15
Total Directly Employed Home Helps / HCSAs	Headcount	10,614	9,916	9,235	9,095	8,389	7,663	7,117

### HSE Direct - Homehelp / Health Care Support Assistants

Health Care Support Assistants (formerly Home Helps) Community Healthcare Organisation	Headcount	Dec-16	Dec-17	Dec-18	Dec-19	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22
Total Directly Employed Home Helps / HCSAs	Headcount	6,686	6,342	6,134	5,712	5,268	5,195	5,306