



29 May 2023

Deputy Michael Lowry,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Lowry,

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: 23/23168

To ask the Minister for Health concerning the homecare sector which has been engaged in discussions with his Department and the HSE since December 2022 about homecare Tender 2023; the reason in December 2022, the HSE informed the sector they were not ready to go to market with the tender 2023, forcing homecare sector providers to agree to a second extension of the original tender 2018 through to 30 April 2023; the reason on 25 April, the HSE again informed homecare sector providers that they had not yet concluded the Tender 2023 and again informed providers they were unilaterally extending the arrangements yet again to 30 June 2023; if he will ensure a resolve to the situation is found as soon as possible, ensuring that Tender 2023 is not delayed again; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Home Support Services are an important component of the provision of service to older people with assessed needs and to support them in their choice of living in their own home and community. The HSE, working within its available resources, has sought to maintain and when possible, expand the range and volume of services available to support people to remain in their own homes, to prevent early admission to long term residential care and to support people to return to their homes following an acute hospital admission.

Home Support services for Older People are provided either by 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 2022 the HSE commenced a process of engagement with Home Support Providers, via their representative bodies NCCN and HCCI, in respect of 2023 Tender arrangements. The Invitation to Tender was published on eTenders on the 1st of September 2022. The HSE utilised a two stage process in order to engage the Market. This approach facilitates the option of an Authorisation Scheme model and is open-ended, therefore new entrants to the market may apply to join at any stage, periodically. Contracts awarded to Scheme members will be for a defined period, initially for twelve month period with an option to extend for a further twelve months.

The outcome of Stage 1 was notified to all applicants in January 2023. Engagement has been ongoing with both the provider representative bodies and with the DoH in relation to finalising the current Home Support Tender. The DoH has approved the progression to an Authorisation Scheme and Stage 2 of the Process was published to eTenders on the 25th of May, 2023 with a submission deadline of the 15th of June, 2023. It is anticipated that the Authorisation Scheme will commence in mid-August 2023 subject to completion of the formal internal HSE approval process through EMT to HSE Board.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long tail on the 'n'.

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