



17th June 2024.

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 17682/24

To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware of concerns raised by HSE home support service workers who fear the recruitment freeze in the health service is accelerating the privatisation of home support services; the steps he is taking to protect and grow HSE home support services; 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. It aims to enable older people to continue living in their own homes with confidence, security and dignity, and the Government has stated its aim to improve community-based services to make this possible. There is a recognition that for many older people who need support, their preferred option is to remain at home for as long as possible. Home support is a non-statutory service and access to the current service is based on assessment of the person's needs by the HSE, having regard to the available resources and competing demands for the service.

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.

With regard to recruitment of direct Home Support staff, the HSE conducts local rolling recruitment campaigns across the CHOs. A process is in place across the HSE whereby service areas may seek approval for the recruitment of certain grades of staff including Home Care Assistants (Home Support) to assist with patient flow.

In June 2023, the HSE launched an action orientated Resourcing Strategy to help address the future workforce needs of the HSE. This programme of work has been developed with and by the services. It is driven by 5 professional led service groups, one of which is focused on Patient Client Care and Support Grades to include home support workers. The Strategy is available at the following web-link: - [HSE Resourcing Strategy 2023](#).

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan
Head of Service – Home Support
Services for Older People - Access and Integration