



17<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Deputy Dillion,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Dillion,

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 9723/24**

**To ask the Minister for Health what measures are in place to increase the number of home care providers and home help professionals in community healthcare networks versus the level of demand, 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 service arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services.

With regard to increasing the number of Home Support Provider, the competitive tender system for the contracting of home support hours from external companies (indirect service provision/hours) was replaced with an Authorisation Scheme in 2023. The Authorisation Scheme facilitates new entrants over the life time of the scheme with a view to extending capacity. It provides for fixed pricing and a common framework for the delivery of Home Support Services, with an initial term of 24 months but can potentially remain open-ended. Following the successful completion of two Rounds of the Scheme, 102 individual companies have been appointed to the Authorisation Scheme across the 9 CHOs.

The HSE is also committed to the direct employment of Home Support staff to maximum effect for those with the appropriate skill set. The latest available activity data reflects the period to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024. As of this date, there were 5,087 Healthcare Assistants – Home Support (HCAs) directly employed with the HSE nationally.

The HSE is fully cognisant of carer capacity issues across both direct and indirect service provision. With regard to measures being adopted to address carer capacity the *Report of the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group on Home Carers and Nursing Home Healthcare Assistants*, published on 15 October 2022 made 16 recommendations spanning the areas of recruitment; pay and conditions of employment; barriers to employment; training and professional development; sectoral reform; monitoring and implementation. The HSE is a key stakeholder of the Strategic Workforce Implementation Group established to work towards implementation of these recommendations.

In June 2023, the HSE launched an action orientated Resourcing Strategy to help address the future workforce needs of the HSE. The Strategy is available at the following web-link: - [HSE Resourcing Strategy 2023](#). 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.

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 - Access and Integration**