



02 May 2024

Deputy Alan 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 Questions, which was submitted to this Department for response.

PQ: 24/3015

To ask the Minister for Health to provide a current policy document or procedure outlining the HSE's stance on feeding in the community with regard to an elderly individual in receipt of home support; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ: 24/3016

To ask the Minister for Health if feeding is required by a service user in the community home help system, the expected waiting time for a service user to be assessed; what this assessment comprises; if it includes speech and language; 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 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.

Demand for home support continues to increase due to population growth and the increasing dependency of the growing numbers of people aged ≥80years, within the over 65 years' cohort with the latest population projections indicating a 38% increase in the over 65s population and a 68% increase in the over 85s population by 2031. As a result of increased demand, there are waiting lists for home support, now primarily associated with an increasing capacity issue related to the availability of care staff. Priority is given to people in the community with acute needs and people assessed and waiting in acute hospitals, who are in a position to return home with supports. Funding approval for home support for those assessed as requiring it is expedited across the system to ensure minimum waiting times.

The type of support that is provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties. The Home Support Service which people receive is based on the client's care needs as assessed by clinical staff. The support provided and associated care plan will be determined by the assessed level of dependency, the client's ability to undertake activities of daily living and other support structures in place. Assessments are based on individual care needs and referral to other health and social care professionals including Speech and Language Therapy and will depend on the presenting client and their needs as identified via their assessment.

In the case of a client currently in receipt of service, who may require a change to their individual care plan, contact can be made to his/her local Home Support office or public health nurse to request a review whereupon a further assessment will be undertaken.

The National Guidelines & Procedures for the Standardised Implementation of the Home Support Service 2018 is available to view at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/national-guidelines-and-procedures-for-the-standardised-implementation-of-the-home-support-service-hss-guidelines.pdf>

Yours sincerely,



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