



30<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Deputy David Cullinane,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Cullinane,**

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 30409/24**

**To ask the Minister for Health the cost of achieving the living wage for home support workers and home care workers; the cost of full compensation for mileage and travel and any associated costs. -David Cullinane**

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.

In 2023 the existing competitive tender system for the contracting of home support hours from external companies (indirect service provision/hours) was replaced with an Authorisation Scheme which 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.

Department of Health approval and the application of the Authorisation Scheme core hourly rate of €31.00 from 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023 to 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024 inclusive, was subject to the advancement of sectoral reform incorporating travel time for Home Support Workers (HSWs), addressing the living wage and reform of legacy rates as recommended by the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group. Service Providers are required to pay travel time as part of remuneration to staff delivering services on behalf of the HSE in relation to the provision of Home Support Services.

With regard to your query on costs associated with achieving the living wage and full compensation for travel, please note that the Authorisation Scheme rate at €31 per hour for core service incorporates the living wage and payment in relation to mileage to Approved Providers is provided for as outlined in Appendix 1 of the Home Support Services Standard Operating Procedures, information on which, can be found here → [Home Support Services Standard Operating Procedures](#).

Following recent engagement with the Department of Health, the HSE has sanctioned an increase in agreed rates of 1.5% pending all current Approved Providers agreeing to an extension of Service Arrangements under the Authorisation Scheme to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025. The revised rates will be applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024. To note, all Approved Home Support Providers have accepted the HSE's extension offer and will continue to provide this vital service to HSE Home Support clients into 2025.

Monitoring of the day to day operation of the Authorisation Scheme is managed through existing governance structures in each CHO and in accordance with Service Arrangements and the Standard Operating Procedures.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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**Kathleen Jordan**

**Head of Service – Home Support**

**Services for Older People – Access and Integration**