



10th June 2024

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

Dear Deputy Burke,

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 11305/24

To ask the Minister for Health what action his Department is taking to ensure that the authorisation scheme 2023 is enough of an incentive to persuade more individuals to become homecare providers; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 11306/24

To ask the Minister for Health what action his Department is taking to ensure that the authorisation scheme 2023 continues to provide the necessary support to homecare workers in view that the scheme is successful in the sense that it funds the homecare workers travel time, however it fails to fund the necessary mileage that is completed by the homecare worker; 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, having regard to the available resources and the competing demands for the service. The service that people receive is based on an assessment of needs which is undertaken by clinical staff. The support provided and associated personal support/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. The volume and type of service provided to each client is based on individually assessed care needs and will vary dependent on the needs identified and the resources available to meet those needs.

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 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 now 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.

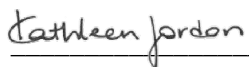
Following the successful completion of two Rounds of the Scheme, 102 individual companies have been appointed to the Authorisation Scheme across the 9 CHOs. The current Service Arrangements may be extended for a further period, in line with terms of the Authorisation Scheme. Any extension of arrangements and associated terms and conditions will be subject to Department of Health approval and engagement with the relevant provider

representative bodies. The Provider Forum, has also been re-established and provides a regular platform for dialogue between the HSE and For Profit and Not for Profit Providers of Home Support Services.

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 Procedure, available at the following web-link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/authorisation-scheme-standard-operating-procedures-v2.pdf>

Yours sincerely,



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