



11th June 2024

Deputy Colm 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 11311/24

To ask the Minister for Health what action his Department is taking to recruit new home support providers, in view that the authorisation scheme has been proven to increase staff retention for home support providers but it has had no impact on the recruitment of new home support providers; 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.

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. As the service has expanded over the years, and as more providers have entered the market, providing much needed capacity to enable more people to remain at home for longer; formal arrangements with external providers have been put in place through the tendering process. This process ensures fairness and transparency in the selection of service providers and ensures an appropriate standard of services being delivered.

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.

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.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan

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