



23rd May 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 11317/24

To ask the Minister for Health to set out in tabular form the current waiting times for elderly home support services across the different regions nationally, and what action his Department is taking to reduce these waiting times and if he will make a statement on the matter. Colm Burke

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 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.

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. In the context of increasing demand, priority is given to those being discharged from acute hospitals who are in a position to return home with supports and to those in the community with acute needs. Funding approval is expedited across the system to ensure minimum waiting times, however there may be delays between the approval of funding and the commencement of service delivery, particularly in certain regions due to carer availability.

Available waiting list data reflects those that have been assessed and waiting for the provision of Home Support. Please see **Appendix 1**, which details the number of clients assessed and waiting for Home Support Services. As at 31st March 2024, the total number of people assessed and waiting for a carer to be assigned stood at 5,708. Of the 5,708 waiting on a carer to be assigned, 2,716 are new clients and 2,992 are existing clients waiting on additional service.

At present, activity data in relation to the average length of waiting time is not collated nationally. While this information may be available locally, it would take considerable resources to collate this nationally. By their very nature, Home Support waiting lists reflect a point in time. Given the finite resources available within Home Support services, waiting list management processes must take into account the HSEs prioritisation procedures, wherein those whose clinically assessed needs are greater than others, are prioritised for service. In light of these parameters, providing an average time frame a person remains on the waiting list would ultimately provide an inaccurate view of the Home Support waiting list in its totality.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan

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Head of Service – Home Support

Services for Older People - Community Operations

Appendix 1. Number of clients assessed and waiting for Home Support Services on 31st March 2024, by CHO.

CHO	Description	2024		
		Total	New	Additional
National Total		5,708	2,716	2,992
CHO1	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	692	341	351
CHO2	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	935	452	483
CHO3	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	794	263	531
CHO4	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	1,302	841	461
CHO5	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	869	182	687
CHO6	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	252	132	120
CHO7	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	311	311	-
CHO8	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	546	191	355
CHO9	Waiting on Carers - New & Additional	7	3	4