



Deputy Patricia Ryan
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

5th June 2024

Dear Deputy,

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 23160/24

To ask the Minister for Health the progress made in advancing recommendation ten of the Cross-Departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group, to develop a competency framework that recognises home care workers with additional training and specialist qualifications; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

In March 2022, the Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler, T.D., established a cross-departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group and this Group was charged with examining, and formulating recommendations to address challenges in frontline carer roles in home support and long-term residential care sectors. The *Report of the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group on Home Carers and Nursing Home Healthcare Assistants* was published on 15 October 2022 and made 16 recommendations spanning the areas of recruitment; pay and conditions of employment; barriers to employment; training and professional development; sectoral reform; and monitoring and implementation.

The implementation of the Advisory Group's recommendations is supported by an Implementation Group. One of the key recommendations is the development of a '*A competency framework for home support workers and healthcare assistants should be developed to enable the recognition of prior learning and qualifications, to support career development, and to align grades of employment with qualifications in line with relevant regulations*'.

The HSE is a key stakeholder of the Strategic Workforce Implementation Group. In June of last year the HSE launched an action orientated Resourcing Strategy to help address the future workforce needs of the HSE. The Strategy is available at the following web-link: - [HSE Resourcing Strategy 2023](#). This programme of work has been developed with and by the services. It is driven by 5 professional led service groups. One of which is focused on Patient client care and support grades to include home support workers. Progress to date to support the development of a competency framework includes the following: -



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta –
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- **Reviewing of the Job Specifications and Eligibility Criteria:**

A sub-group dedicated to reviewing the job specifications and eligibility criteria for the role of Health Care Assistant- Home Support is nearing conclusion. This will provide a comprehensive framework that outlines the professional standards and requirements for the role in the HSE.

- **Awaiting Publication of the Regulatory Standards:**

The publication of the regulatory standards by the Health and Information Quality Authority (HIQA) is awaited. These standards are crucial as they will establish the benchmarks for quality and compliance within the home support health care sector. Upon publication, the regulatory standards may necessitate a re-review of the developed framework and eligibility criteria. This ensures that the job specifications and professional requirements are fully aligned with the latest regulatory standards and best practice.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Whelehan

Assistant National Director

Older People Operations



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