



11th April, 2025

Deputy Marie Sherlock,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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: 15052/25 To ask the Minister for Health if she intends introducing registration for care workers and home carers, much like registration of social care workers through CORU following qualification; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Marie Sherlock

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.

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. The home support service is managed by the local Home Support Management Team within each Health Region to ensure that this key service is available at the required times, in a flexible way and at the appropriate standard to support clients' assessed needs.

Health Care Assistants (HCAs) Home Support are non-clinical employees and currently there is no legislative requirement for formal registration of this grade of staff. Home support staff provide assistance, support and direct personal care to service users in their own home to promote independence and autonomy of the client. The service required is determined by an individual clinical care needs assessment which is conducted at the outset by a registered health professional such as a Public Health Nurse and this in turn informs a service user's care plan and schedule of service that the HCA follows.

The Department of Health is progressing the development of a regulatory framework and licencing system for home support providers in 2025. The regulatory framework remains in draft and is expected to comprise of the following elements:

- Primary legislation for the licencing of home support providers, including the HSE. The General Scheme of the Health (Amendment) (Licencing of Professional Home Support Providers) Bill 2024 was published in May 2024;
- Secondary legislation in the form of Regulations and
- National Standards for Home Support Services in development by HIQA.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan

Head of Service

Services for Older People, Access and Integration