



19th February 2025.

Deputy Michael Cahill,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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: 2566/25

To ask the Minister for Health to fully review the national homecare waiting list with a view to correcting the urban/rural imbalance which show a quarter of the waiting list is based in one of the nine healthcare regions, Cork and Kerry with 1,160; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael Cahill

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. The population of Ireland is ageing, with the latest population projections indicating significant increase from its 2022 level of 780k persons to over 1.0m by 2030, and circa 1.94m by 2057 (Census 2022). With an ageing population and an increasing need to provide care for individuals with more complex requirements, the demand for home support services and home support staff continues to grow, leading to waiting list for services.

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 priority needs. The service is currently provided by Health Care Assistant (Home Support) staff directly employed by the HSE or when commissioned, by staff working with voluntary and private providers who have formal service arrangements with the HSE to deliver services under the Home Support Authorisation Scheme.

The HSE has committed to the direct employment of Home Support staff to maximum effect for those with the appropriate skill set. However, it should be noted that private providers are part of the landscape for Home Support provision and will continue to be used, not least for the choice of care which they allow to the user of the service. The HSE has implemented an Authorisation Scheme (AS) for the supply of the Home Support Scheme (HSS) that commenced on 14th August 2023. Under the Authorisation scheme the rates for the Home Support Scheme are fixed for all Approved Providers. The HSE has appointed Home Support Scheme Providers as Approved Providers under the Authorisation Scheme in each Health Region.

Recruitment and retention of Home Support staff for both direct and indirect service provision remains a significant challenge leading to capacity issues cross the Health Regions. The Recruitment Reform and Resourcing (RRR) Programme was established in June 2022 to form a coordinated response to these challenges and the [HSE Resourcing Strategy – Resourcing our Future](#) was launched in June 2023.

In addition, the HSE conducts local rolling recruitment campaigns across the Health Regions. It is recognised that supporting and developing local talent will be key in developing a sustainable workforce for the future and as such one initiative that is currently in progress is the development of two multi-agency local pilot projects working with education, social inclusion organisations and the HSE to identify people committed to that local area, supporting them in obtaining the relevant qualifications and employment.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan
Head of Service
Services for Older People, Access and Integration