



19th February 2025.

Deputy Paul Nicholas Gogarty,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Gogarty,

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: 3178/25

To ask the Minister for Health the additional respite care available to family members while their carer is on maternity leave; and if she will make a statement on the matter; Paul Nicholas Gogarty

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 Community Healthcare Organisation/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.

Home support staff who are directly employed by the HSE, have traditionally been, and remain mainly part-time workers due to the nature and flexibility of the work involved and the care needs of clients that must be attended to within specific time frames during any day. The home support service which people receive is based on an individual client's care needs which are assessed by clinical staff and the home support provided will vary dependent on the level of dependency and other support structures in place such as attendance at day care etc.

The HSE endeavours to provide cover for staff on all types of leave with staff providing cross-cover when required and clients with the highest care needs are prioritised for cover during periods of leave. Clients and their families are kept informed in relation to planned staff leave. In exceptional circumstances where cross-cover is not available to a home support client during a period of planned leave, respite services may be offered to the client.

The overall home support resource and the range of providers, including HSE directly employed staff, is carefully managed 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.

Yours sincerely,

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