



Ceann na Seirbhíse do Dhaoine
Scothaosta
FSS an Iardheiscirt
Teach Caha,
Párc Ghnó & Teicneolaíochta,
Bóthar na Modh Feirme,
Corcaigh

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Mr. Michael Cahill, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 38475/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times across County Kerry; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

PQ ref 38476/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Killorglin and mid-Kerry region; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38477/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Dingle and West Kerry region; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38478/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Killarney and east Kerry region; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38479/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Cahersiveen and Iveragh region, County Kerry; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38480/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Kenmare region, County Kerry; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38481/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Castleisland region, County Kerry; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38482/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Tralee region, County Kerry; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 38483/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to give a detailed breakdown of home care waiting lists and waiting times for the Listowel and north Kerry region; the measures being put in place to address same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”



Dear Deputy Cahill,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

HSE South West is acutely aware that there are capacity issues across both direct and indirect provision of Home Support throughout the region. Even with the large number of Health Care Assistant (HCA) staff that we have, we constantly require more staff because of the ever-increasing demand for our service. Recruitment and retention challenges in the home support sector are well documented and these are particularly acute in our more rural locations. Higher density urban areas have access to a wider pool of prospective staff when recruiting and service delivery is easier to roster when travel times are shorter between clients and can be assisted by public transport. Private providers, who assist the HSE in delivering home support, are also more plentiful in urban locations.

The ageing population is also directly impacting our workforce with HCA (Home Support) staff retirements or resignations. Another challenge which we have faced is competing with the private and voluntary sectors to access the same skilled workforce. In addition, there appears to be a shift away from caring roles, such as the HCA (Home Support) role, towards other employment sectors. To illustrate the challenges we are encountering, in 2024 there were 105 HCA Home Support staff recruited in the HSE South West region, but this was negatively offset by 161 retirements/resignations, leaving a net loss of 56 staff.

All of our offices are delivering as much support as they can within available capacity in the face of staff shortages (which can arise not only because of resignations or retirements but also because of unscheduled or unexpected leave) and increased demand. We strive to maintain service for those who already have secured support while also doing our best to deliver new or additional support to as many clients as possible. Waiting lists are constantly being validated and significant work has been undertaken to address the waiting list for home support in the Kerry region. Priority is given to those clients requiring discharge from hospital and with higher levels of dependency.

With regard to **PQ ref 38475**, as at the end of June 2025, **105 clients** were waitlisted for home support in County Kerry. 42 of these clients are awaiting allocation of a new service, while 63 existing clients are awaiting allocation of additional or increased hours.

The majority of clients who are prescribed Home Support have a service commence almost immediately. However, on occasion, part of the prescribed service may not be put in place - this would be predominantly down to lack of carer availability in the area.

In relation to **PQ refs 38476/38477/38478/38479/38480/38481/38482 and 38483**, home support waiting list data in Kerry is collated under each Home Support Resource Managers area, as set out in the below table. Please note that Cahirciveen/Iveragh data is compiled under the Killorglin sector's remit, while Kenmare data is compiled under the Killarney sector's remit. The waiting list data provided is broken down into those clients awaiting a new service and existing clients awaiting additional support.

Area:	New:	Existing:	Total:
Tralelee	5	5	10
Castleisland	26	35	61
Listowel	6	1	7
Killorglin * incorporates Cahirciveen/Iveragh	3	15	18



West Kerry	0	0	0
Killarney * incorporates Kenmare	2	7	9
Total Waiting List - Kerry	42	63	105

It is difficult to quantify waiting times between approval and commencement of home support for the region because, as can be seen from the above table, areas differ in terms of demand, capacity and staff availability. Many of our clients are allocated full or partial service shortly after application. Many are receiving a Monday to Friday service; where clients have been approved for a seven day service we are unfortunately often challenged in relation to staffing at weekends and that aspect of their service may be waitlisted until availability arises. Clients currently on our waiting list for support may be awaiting either additional/partial or a new service for up to 30 weeks, depending on staff availability in their locality. When we recruit additional staff through ongoing campaigns, they are allocated as a priority to the areas where they are needed most.

In order to meet the growing demand for home support and enhance our capacity to deliver same, HSE South West continues strident recruitment efforts in this region, in the face of an often challenging employment environment. We have two dedicated Recruitment Coordinators for Health Care Assistant (Home Support) recruitment, with campaigns running throughout the year. A recruitment campaign for Health Care Assistants (Home Support) staff was undertaken in this region in January and a further campaign took place in June 2025, with the focus for placement of successful candidates in those areas where home support staff are needed most.

Our population is growing and it is also ageing and this means that demand for home support services is projected to increase substantially. HSE South West will continue to work across care groups and with senior management and Department of Health colleagues to identify strategies to address capacity challenges and improve the quality of life for older persons living in their own communities in Kerry and wider HSE South West region.

Measures are constantly being reviewed and evaluated to address our waiting lists and these are having a noticeable impact – in June 2023, 273 clients in Kerry were awaiting allocation of a new or additional service, compared to 105 Kerry clients awaiting new or additional support in June 2025. The waiting list has reduced by approximately 60% within two years. Supporting older people as they age and improving access to the home support services is a key priority for HSE South West and is an area where significant efforts continue to be made to support the delivery of this valuable service.

I trust this clarifies the position and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older Persons