



8th July, 2025

Deputy Brendan Smith,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Smith,

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: 34622/25

To ask the Minister for Health the measures that will be introduced to ensure more home support workers will be available to provide a very important service where unacceptable delays in such provision exist at present; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Brendan Smith

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 the service which people receive is based on an individual client's needs which are assessed by clinical staff. The home support provided will vary dependent on the level of dependency, other support structures in place such as attendance at day care etc., 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 ESRI report, published on 30th June, 'Projections of national demand and bed capacity requirements for older people's care in Ireland, 2022-2040' indicates that by 2040, one in five people in Ireland will be aged 65+ with the population aged 85 years and over projected to more than double. The report is available to view at the link below: - <https://www.esri.ie/publications/projections-of-national-demand-and-bed-capacity-requirements-for-older-peoples-care-in>

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. Home Support Services for Older People are provided either by directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal service arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. 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.

In March 2022, the cross departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group was established. The Strategic Workforce Advisory Group was chaired by the Department of Health along with seven government department representatives. The group was established to assess workforce challenges associated with publicly and privately frontline carer roles across Home Support and nursing home services. The Report of the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group on Home Carers and Nursing Home Health Care Assistants, published in October 2022, summarised the Group's work and set out 16 comprehensive recommendations. These addressed issues across recruitment, employment terms and conditions, obstacles to workforce entry, education and training, and structural reform.

Implementation of the 16 recommendations is progressing under the leadership of a cross-departmental group chaired by the Department of Health. Significant reforms have already been achieved, including the introduction of the Home Support Authorisation Scheme in August 2023, following a tender process. The Authorisation Scheme delivers on key sectoral reform commitments, such as payment for travel time for home support

providers, ensuring carers are paid at least the National Living Wage, and aligning legacy funding rates with a fixed price model. Implementation updates can be found at the below link.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-health/publications/strategic-workforce-advisory-group-on-home-carers-and-nursing-home-healthcare-assistants-implementation/>

The HSE is a key stakeholder of the Strategic Workforce Implementation Group. In June of 2023, 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.

Yours sincerely,

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