

**Head of Service for Older Persons**  
HSE South West - Health Service Executive  
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**Ceann na Seirbhíse do Dhaoine Scothaosta**  
FSS Iardheiscirt - Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Teach Caha, Párc Ghnó & Teicneolaíochta  
Bóthar na Modh Feirme, Corcaigh  
**Tel: 021 4923854**

24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

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

**PQ ref 11711/25:**

**“To ask the Minister for Health if the shortfall in homecare provision in Kerry will be urgently addressed; the number of positions that are currently vacant; the number of staff required to fill these positions (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter”.**

**Details Supplied: as I have many constituents who have been assessed and granted homecare hours, only to be told, they cannot be provided as the HSE does not have the Health Care staff to provide the care**

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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

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.

HSE South West continues to endeavour to deliver a home support service to as many clients as possible in Kerry in the face of a challenging employment environment and an increasing demand for home support. 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. Since the COVID pandemic, and with Ireland currently at full employment with unemployment rates dipping to their lowest levels since records began, there also appears to be a shift away from caring roles, such as the HCA (Home Support) role, towards other employment sectors.

The majority of clients who are prescribed Home Support in Kerry 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. Our waiting list is made up of both clients who are awaiting a new service (i.e. currently are not in receipt of any service), and clients who are awaiting additional hours/part of the originally prescribed service (i.e. they are receiving some home support).

The HSE is constantly striving to increase our workforce and meet service needs in the Kerry region. Recruitment campaigns are on-going and successful applicants are deployed as a priority to the areas where they are most needed. A recruitment campaign for Health Care Assistant Home Support staff has been undertaken in the HSE South West region, which encompasses Cork and Kerry. The outcome of this campaign will be utilised to address requirements in the Home Support Service across both counties. The current number of vacant positions in the Kerry Home Support region is 30 Wholetime Equivalent Posts (WTEs) and therefore at least 30 staff will be required to fill these posts.

Configuration and agreement of contracted hours with successful applicants will determine the number of personnel required.

Provision of Home Support is a core service for older people and their families and is highly valued by service users and their families because it enables older people to live independently and with dignity in their own homes for longer. It also enables many older people to return home following acute hospital admission. HSE South West is acutely aware that there are capacity issues across both direct and indirect provision of Home Support in this region. Our population is growing and it is also ageing and this means that demand for home support services is projected to increase substantially. Improving access to home support is a service priority and, to this end, we continue to utilise all avenues to fulfil our service requirements.

Yours sincerely,

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Jackie Daly  
Head of Service for Older Persons

