



19th May, 2025

Deputy Catherine Connolly,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Connolly,

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: 22050/25

To ask the Minister for Health in relation to home care assistants providing home support services, the official policy of the HSE in relation to home care assistants providing assistance with eating and drinking to clients with physical limitations on feeding; when, in what circumstances and on what terms, such assistance may be provided within each individual CHO, in tabular form; the reason for discrepancies between CHOs; the reason for the changes in such provision within the past year; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Catherine Connolly

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.

Home Support for Older People are provided either by directly employed staff of the HSE, or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. The type of support that is provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties. The Home Support Service which people receive is based on the service users' care needs as assessed by clinical staff. The support provided and associated care plan will be determined by the assessed level of dependency, the service users' ability to undertake activities of daily living and other support structures in place. Assessments are based on individual care needs and will depend on the presenting service user and their needs as identified via their assessment.

In the case of a service user currently in receipt of home support, who may require assistance with eating and drinking due to physical limitations, such assistance can be provided in terms of prompting and assisting with the presentation of same to the service user. Such tasks would typically be included in the service users' personal care/support plan arising out of their initial needs assessment. In cases where there has been a deterioration in a service users' capabilities since their initial needs assessment, and a change/update to their personal care/support plan is warranted, contact can be made to their local Home Support office or public health nurse to request a review whereupon a further assessment of their needs will be undertaken.

The National Guidelines & Procedures for the Standardised Implementation of the Home Support Service 2018 is available to view at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/national-guidelines-and-procedures-for-the-standardised-implementation-of-the-home-support-service-hss-guidelines.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

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