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30th November 2021

Deputy Pauline Tully TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 56100/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons waiting for homecare support in each CHO; the total number of hours allocated in each of the past 12 months in each CHO; the average length of time that persons have been waiting; the single longest period of time that a person has been waiting; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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 care needs by the HSE and having regard to available resources and competing demands for the service from those people with assessed needs. Home Support Services are an important component of the provision of service to older people with assessed needs and to support them in their choice of living in their own home and community.

The National Service Plan for 2021 provides for the following: -

- 23.67m home support hours to be delivered to 55,675 people by year end, inclusive of an additional 5m hours funded under the Winter Plan 2020/2021
- 230,000 hours to be delivered as part of the Home Support Pilot Scheme to commence in 2021 and
- 360,000 home support hours provided to 235 people under the Intensive Home Support Scheme

Home Support services for older people are provided either by directly employed staff or by voluntary and private providers who have formal tender arrangements with the HSE to deliver the services. The type of support provided includes personal care and, where appropriate, essential household duties relating to the client's assessed needs.

Preliminary activity data currently available reflects the period to end of October 2021. As of this date, 16,748,157 home support hours were delivered nationally to circa 53,000 people. Also, as of this date, there were 310 people waiting for funding for new or additional home support, while 4,825 people were approved for Home Support but are awaiting a carer to be assigned. Please note that the data is preliminary in nature and may be subject to change.

Please see Appendix 1 below for a breakdown of the current Home Support waiting list both for those waiting for funding and for a carer to be assigned for the same period. In relation to your question regarding the length of time which those on the waiting list have been waiting, the HSE currently does not collate that information nationally. While this information may be available locally, it would take considerable resources to collate this nationally.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of people assessed and waiting on funding for home support throughout 2020 and into 2021 – this has been as a result of a number of factors including validation of waiting lists and availability of funding to address those waiting. As part of the ongoing validation process, the figures for those waiting for funding for new or additional Home Support have greatly reduced between 2020 and 2021.

Further funding to provide an additional 5m hours in 2021, as part of the Winter Plan 2020/2021, has further enabled the HSE to keep the number of clients assessed and waiting on funding to a minimum in addition to the provision of packages of care to support reablement and those with complex care needs in order to avoid long-term care. This will amount to a service provision of approximately 24m hours in 2021.

The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to develop a new stand-alone, statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home support services. Developing a new statutory scheme will be an important step in ensuring that the system operates in a consistent and fair manner for all those who need home support services.

Yours sincerely,



Sandra Tuohy
Assistant National Director – Operations
Services for Older People

Appendix 1 – Home Support Activity – October 2021 YTD

Home Support Activity 2021

Report Date: October 2021

CHO Summary YTD	HOURS YTD	WAITING LIST	
	Hours Delivered	Funding	Carers
	Total	Total	Total
CHO 1 *	1,507,439	-	208
CHO 2	1,937,240	-	638
CHO 3	1,403,376	38	461
CHO 4	2,371,337	-	651
CHO 5	1,576,917	-	1,561
CHO 6	1,576,473	-	201
CHO 7	1,920,882	196	500
CHO 8	1,704,599	21	554
CHO 9	2,749,893	55	51
National Total	16,748,157	310	4,825