



**Head of Service for Older Persons
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**
Health Service Executive
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Cúram Sláinte Pobail - Corcaigh & Ciarraí
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9th February 2024

Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan, T.D.,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ ref 53278/23

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on a home support waiting list in CHO 4, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) continues to endeavour to deliver a home support service to as many clients as possible in the face of a challenging employment environment and an increasing demand for home support. The HSE's Home Support service is provided either by directly employed HSE staff, or by voluntary and private providers who have formal arrangements with the HSE to deliver services.

Across Cork and Kerry there are currently in excess of 7,000 people receiving a Home Support Service. The table below illustrates the number of clients across this CHO awaiting a new or additional Home Support service as at the end of November 2023:

Number of <u>new</u> clients currently awaiting allocation of a Home Support service:	910
Number of people currently in receipt of a Home Support service who are awaiting allocation of additional hours:	511
Total (end of November 2023)	1,421

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. Our wait 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). Waiting lists are constantly being validated to ensure they are correct, with priority given to those being discharged from Hospital.

Despite the significant level of service provision, the demand for Home Support, and its importance as an alternative service to long stay care, has grown considerably over the past number of years. The ageing population is also directly impacting our workforce with 189 Health Care Assistants (Home Support) retiring or resigning in the period January to end September 2023. Other challenges which we have faced throughout the year include competing with the private and voluntary sectors to access the same skilled workforce and the recent pause on recruitment. 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 Health Care Assistant (Home Support) role, towards other employment sectors.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare continues to work towards increasing Home Support provision and reducing waiting lists across the region; however, challenges are ongoing in relation to recruitment and retention of staff with certain areas experiencing increased pressures. Approved private providers, who work with the HSE in fulfilling Home Support service requests, are experiencing similar staffing issues.

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 for Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and, to this end, we continue to make every effort to increase capacity and fulfil our service requirements.

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

Yours sincerely,



Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older People

