



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Pobail
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Office of the Assistant National Director –
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Services for Older People

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20 February 2024

Deputy Colm Burke,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Burke,

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: 23/47629

To ask the Minister for Health if he will take the necessary steps to ensure that future tender invitations for home support services will include mileage payments to homecare workers (as is the case for HSE employed carers); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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 HSE, working within its available resources, has sought to maintain and when possible, expand the range and volume of services available to support people to remain in their own homes, to prevent early admission to long term residential care and to support people to return to their homes following an acute hospital admission.

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.

In 2023, the HSE completed a tendering process and established a Home Support Authorisation Scheme for the provision of home support services, commencing in August 2023. The Authorisation Scheme model is open-ended therefore new entrants to the market may apply to join at any stage, periodically. Contracts awarded to Scheme members are for a defined period, initially for twelve-month period with an option to extend.

DoH approval to proceed with the Authorisation Scheme and offer of a core rate of €31 per hour was subject to the advancement of sectoral reform incorporating travel time for Home Support Workers (HSWs), addressing the living wage and reform of legacy rates as recommended by the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group. It is noted that within the rate being applied, it will be mandatory for Service Providers to pay travel time as part of remuneration to staff delivering services to the HSE in relation to the provision of Home Support Services. It is the HSE's requirement that the "living wage" (i.e., the hourly wage rate that should provide employees with sufficient income to achieve an agreed acceptable minimum standard of living) will be paid by the Approved Providers to its employees providing Home Support Services. It is a matter for each individual Provider the manner and methodology for the payment of travel time.

Home Support does provide for payment of mileage in certain circumstance, the payment of travel costs (mileage) may be considered in relation to Home Support Package (HSP) where;

- It is considered essential in order to provide critical services, particularly in rural areas where no other arrangement is possible, or
- Where services such as collection of medications or essential shopping for food is specifically itemised by HSE staff in the clients home care plan (home care/home support schedule of services).

The terms and conditions of the Home Support Tender 2023 are detailed in the Tender 2022 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) available at the following web-link:- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/non-statutory-sector/home-support-services-documentation.html>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Jordan
Head of Service – Home Support
Services for Older People
Community Operations