



17th June 2024.

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 17683/24

To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that HSE home support service is not listed on hospital discharge forms, but private care companies are included as an option; the reason this is the case; and if he will ensure that the HSE home support service is listed.

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 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. As the service has expanded over the years, and with more providers having entered the market, providing much needed capacity to enable more people to remain at home for longer; formal arrangements with external providers have been put in place through the tendering process. This process ensures fairness and transparency in the selection of service providers and, in the absence of regulation, to ensure an appropriate standard of services being delivered.

In 2023 the existing competitive tender system for the contracting of home support hours from external companies (indirect service provision/hours) was replaced with an Authorisation Scheme which facilitates new entrants over the life time of the scheme with a view to extending capacity. Following the successful completion of two Rounds of the Scheme, 102 individual companies have been appointed to the Authorisation Scheme across the 9 CHOs.

At all times, the HSE prioritises the clinically assessed needs of the client requiring Home Support, in particular those awaiting discharge from an Acute setting. Should an acute patient require Home Support following discharge, the HSE will attempt to deliver their Home Support service directly, however if that is not possible, due to either the geographical location of the patient or due to carer capacity issues in the locality, the HSE will engage with Approved Providers appointed to the Home Support Authorisation Scheme in that location, with the patient given the option to choose their Provider from the Home Support Client Choice Form, should they wish to do so.

The overall Home Support resource and the range of providers, including HSE directly employed staff, is carefully managed by local health offices within each community healthcare organisation, to ensure that this key service is available at the required times, in a flexible way and at the appropriate standard to support clients' changing assessed needs.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan

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Head of Service – Home Support

Services for Older People - Access and Integration