

26<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 33623/24**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the waiting list for home help in South Lee, Cork".**

**PQ ref 33624/24**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the number of new applications for home help that were approved but not allocated due to financial constraints in the south and north Lee areas in County Cork in each of the past 12 months, in tabular form."**

Dear Deputy Ó Laoghaire,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Despite a significant level of service provision, the demand for home support nationally and regionally continues to grow as the population aged over 65 years' increases. Improving access to home support is a Government and HSE priority.

The majority of clients who are prescribed Home Support in this CHO have a service commence almost immediately. However, on occasion, part of the prescribed service may not be put in place due to a lack of carer availability in the area. Many of our clients are allocated full or partial service shortly after application. Our waiting 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).

In response to **PQ 33623/24**, there are 640 clients currently awaiting allocation home support in the South Lee area, with 434 of these clients awaiting a new service and 206 clients awaiting additional service. In the first half of 2024, a total of 400,744 home support hours were delivered in the South Lee area – 234,575 directly and a further 136,169 by our private providers. Waiting lists are constantly being validated with priority given to those being discharged from hospital.

Our ongoing aim is to increase Home Support provision and reduce waiting lists in South Lee and across the region; however, challenges are ongoing and well-documented nationally 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. The ageing population is also impacting our workforce with Health Care Assistant (Home Support) staff retirements or resignations. Other challenges we have faced include the recent recruitment pause and competition with the private and voluntary sectors to access the same skilled workforce. 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.

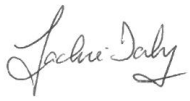
We continue to recruit staff to approved Health Care Assistant Home Support posts which have been sanctioned for filling. During the recent recruitment pause, derogation was sought and granted for a total of 49 Health Care Assistant staff. There is a Health Care Assistant Home Support panel in place in both Cork and Kerry for the purpose of recruitment and approved posts are being offered on a continuous basis.

With regard to **PQ 33624/24**, none of our waitlisted clients in South Lee or in the wider CHO region are awaiting funding approval or waitlisted due to financial constraints; the only reason for the delay in allocating their service is carer availability.

In conclusion, improving access to home support is a service priority for the HSE in this region and, to this end, we continue our efforts to recruit as many suitable candidates as possible to 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,



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Jackie Daly  
Head of Service for Older People

