



17th June 2024.

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Boyd Barrett,

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 11805/24

To ask the Minister for Health the procedure for a new company providing home support to be placed on the approved providers list in CHO6; if the tendering process only occurs once per year; 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 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 as more providers have 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. It provides for fixed pricing and a common framework for the delivery of Home Support Services.

Following the successful completion of two Rounds of the Scheme, 102 individual companies have been appointed to the Authorisation Scheme across the 9 CHOs. The current Service Arrangements may be extended for a further period, in line with terms of the Authorisation Scheme. Any extension of arrangements and associated terms and conditions will be subject to Department of Health approval and engagement with the relevant provider representative bodies. The Provider Forum, has also been re-established and provides a regular platform for dialogue between the HSE and For Profit and Not for Profit Providers of Home Support Services.

Interested Home Support Providers, who are not already on the Home Support Authorisation Framework and have made contact with the HSE directly in relation to same, have been advised to ensure they are registered on eTenders for CPV codes relevant to the areas of service they are interested in providing, if they have not already done so, together with providing them with a helpdesk contact number for any queries they may have.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan

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Head of Service – Home Support

Services for Older People - Access and Integration