



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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27th May 2024

Deputy Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 21245/24

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of health care support assistants in Cork; the number of individuals using the service; and the areas that are using the 4-TEAM rota system, by local area, in tabular form.”

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

Provision of Home Support is a core service for older people and their families and is an essential service for thousands of people across the country. 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. The service is highly valued by service users and their families because it enables older people to live independently and with dignity in their own homes for longer. It also enables many older people to return home following acute hospital admission. For these reasons, improving access to this service is a Government and HSE priority.

There are challenges in the sector, particularly on the workforce side. Progress has been made and we are delivering more support hours than ever and we currently have sufficient funding for home support hours but do not have the carers to deliver it. We continue to recruit staff to approved Health Care Assistant Home Support posts which have been sanctioned for filling. Since the introduction of the current recruitment pause, derogation has been 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.

The Health Care Assistant contract of employment contains a requirement for staff to be rostered. This has been agreed nationally following engagement between staff representative groups and the HSE and we are obliged to comply with this agreement.

Health Care Assistants now operate in teams working to a set roster arrangement over a four-week period to allow for services to be facilitated, the covering of leave etc. In the delivery of service and the implementation of rostering, the HSE recognises the care needs of our clients and endeavours to minimise disruption to service and undue stress while these new arrangements are introduced. We have kept these teams where possible to a cohort of four staff. Within the current model it is not possible to reduce the team composition below four in order to ensure they are effective.



The below table sets out, by area, the number of health care support assistants within the Cork region and the number of individuals using the service:

AREA	Number of HCAs (Home Support)*	No of Clients currently receiving Service**
Millstreet	77	246
Mallow	57	312
Charleville	70	268
Fermoy/Mitchelstown	47	188
Castlemartyr	78	403
Farranree/Knocknaheeny	50	139
Mayfield/Grattan Street	46	198
Blarney	20	154
Glanmire	63	259
Douglas	34	135
Carrigaline	34	125
Blackrock/Mahon	65	236
Kinsale	34	109
Ballyphehane	67	178
Ballincollig	101	407
Bandon	34	184
Macroon	40	146
Dunmanway	46	176
Skibbereen	60	191
Bantry	65	216
Clonakilty	47	159

* **Note that HCA numbers provided refer to 'headcount' data and not Whole Time Equivalents as many of our staff work a range of hours (ranging from 10 to 39 hours), with many staff working less than 39 hours.**

** **As at end of March 2024.**

All areas are implementing or have implemented the roster system. We are obliged to implement same to comply with the nationally agreed terms outlined above. The Home Support service will, where possible, try to ensure that a client's current Health Care Assistant continues to deliver some of their support whilst equally ensuring that the remainder of their service is delivered by similarly qualified and professional Home Support staff. Our experience to date following the introduction of these rosters in areas across this region is that, once the initial set up period has taken place, our clients have adapted well to the new arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely,



 Jackie Daly
 Head of Service for Older People

