



**Cúram Sláinte  
Phobail, Iarthar**  
ag freastal ar Ghailimh,  
Maighéo agus Ros Comáin

**Community  
Healthcare West**  
serving Galway, Mayo  
and Roscommon

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10<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Catherine Connolly TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Ref: PQ ref 1572/25**

**To ask the Minister for Health to confirm if it is official policy of the HSE that home care assistants should only provide assistance with eating and drinking to clients where a family member/carer is not available to assist the client with eating and drinking; if so, the reason that home care help is being limited in this way, placing a greater burden on carers; if not, the reason 'eating, drinking and dysphagia policy and procedure CHO2' policy, dated 27 March 2024, limits the care provided to patients in the CHO2 area in a way which does not apply to patients in other CHOs; the reason the standard of care was reduced in CHO2 in particular.**

Dear Deputy Connolly,

I refer to PQ ref 1572/25 uploaded on the PAD System on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2024, due for response on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 regarding representation you have made to the Minister of Health. The HSE has been directed to reply directly to you on this matter. The following outlines the current position.

I have liaised with Home Support Services who have advised that Community Healthcare West (CHO2), with input from the Multi-Disciplinary Team completed the Eating, Drinking and Dysphagia Policy in March 2024. Assistance is provided with eating and drinking to clients in exceptional circumstances where a family member/carer is not available to assist a client with eating and drinking. The Health Care Support Assistants (HCSAs) if it is indicated in the client's care plan may assist clients with identified swallowing concerns following training.

Recommendations regarding a client's eating, drinking and swallowing care plan e.g., diet/fluid modification and specific swallow strategies must be clearly documented by a Speech & Language Therapist or other members of the Multi-disciplinary Team on the Swallow Care Plan. Clients with no swallowing difficulties, where a client's family member/carer is not available, require assistance due to dexterity limitations or cognitive issues will require a Multi-Disciplinary Team approach to be implemented. Home Support Services also prompt meals, set up clients for meals and assist with meal preparation and tidy up after if required.

Home Support Services are aware that other CHO areas do not provide any assistance with eating and drinking.

I trust this response addresses any issues you have raised in this instance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Mulligan', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

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Des Mulligan  
Head of Service  
Older Peoples Services  
Community Healthcare West