

Press release**HCCI's pre-Budget submission calls for a New Deal for Home Care Workers*****HCCI calls for a strategic approach to home care service development through Commission on Care and Statutory Home Support Scheme***

Tuesday 8th August: Home and Community Care Ireland (HCCI), the organisation that represents private home care companies, is calling for a new deal for home care workers in its 2024 pre-Budget submission. HCCI says home care workers need guaranteed continuity of income, increase rates paid to home care providers through the HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme to match increases in the National Living Wage, payment for travel time between client calls, career progression options and to be valued as a vital part of the community and social care network.

According to HCCI, the Cross Departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group (CDWAG) on Home Carers and Tender 2023 presented opportunities to deliver once-in-a-generation reform on how Ireland pays and values carers.

Joseph Musgrave, CEO, HCCI said, "While some progress has been made, the new home care Tender should be laying the foundations for the Statutory Home Support Scheme which has been promised by the Government to be legislated for in 2024, but instead it is a missed opportunity to make real, progressive change in the sector. This is against a backdrop of Ireland fast approaching a crisis in care because of this failure to adequately value carers."

While the private and non-profit sector has added nearly 3 million hours of home care capacity since 2019, waiting lists still rose by 25% between 2022 and 2023. This proves that Ireland's needs thousands of new carers now to meet the current need and will need thousands more over the next decade to meet future demand.

Musgrave continued, "The Government deserve praise for their commitment to a 'Home First' model of care and for increasing funding for home care. Nevertheless, funding that is not grounded in a strategic approach will not deliver the paradigm shift needed in how we care for older people. The commitment to 'Home First' remains a vision. We now need a strategy for the care of older people that takes account of lessons from Covid-19 and identifies gaps in Ireland's current approach. Reform of older person's care should be viewed through the same lens as Ireland viewed reform of our health service. We need a Sláintecare for older people."

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About HCCI:

HCCI is the representative body for the home care sector. It currently represents 31 member companies (with 100 offices nationwide) who among them employ 12,000 carers and provide a managed home care service to over 20,000 older and vulnerable people in Ireland. HCCI

advocates for the highest standard of regulated home care services to be made available to all on a statutory basis, enabling as many people as possible to remain living independently within their homes and communities.

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HCCI's pre-Budget submission outlines priority actions that the Government and home care sector as a whole must undertake to address the debilitating recruitment and crisis that the sector is facing:

1. Guarantee continuity of income for home care workers: Pay home care providers for up to one month when a client's care is paused.
2. Urgently develop a Cross-Departmental Strategic Advisory Group (CDSWAG) implementation plan:
 - Fund mileage expenses for Home Care Workers
 - Reform Social Welfare eligibility rules
 - At minimum, index ~~Tender~~ HSE Authorisation Scheme - 2023 rates against the Living Wage
 - Develop a competency framework and career pathway for home care workers
3. End the Welfare Trap: Introduce Flexibility in Social Welfare
 - End the '3-day rule' in part time jobseekers' payment.
 - Create a pilot scheme where home care workers can receive a temporary public interest exception to social welfare eligibility rules to care for an existing client whose regular home care workers is absent.
4. Implement a national tender for Disability Home Support Services
5. Use the Commission on Care to review existing policies, identify gaps and develop a new care of older persons strategy.
6. Urgently address delays to the Statutory Home Support Scheme.
7. End the postcode lottery of home care waiting lists.
 - Incentivise providers and carers to deliver care in rural areas.
 - Commission a report/establish a forum on the variations in waiting list numbers across CHO's, with a view to developing best practice policies on waiting list management.
8. Use home care to alleviate the hospital overcrowding crisis.
 - Allow hospital to block book home care hours to enable providers to plan strategically and ensure there are carers available to support timely discharge.
 - Better integrate home care providers into the delayed discharge process.
9. Streamline the employment permit process and the employment visa process into one process under the jurisdiction of a single Government Department.

10. Improve data collection and evidence gathering across the sector.