A VISION FOR AN IRELAND THAT CARES

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2027

BY HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND

Published July 2026

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND 2027 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

About Home & Community Care Ireland

Home & Community Care Ireland (HCCI) is the representative body for independent home care providers.

HCCI has 46 member companies who employ over 15,000 home care workers, and provide managed home care services to over 35,000 older and disabled people in Ireland.

About HCCI's Pre-Budget Submission

Home & Community Care Ireland's Pre-Budget Submission has 3 sections of equal priority, recognising the complexity and the importance we attach to 3 key issues impacting the home care sector.

Published: July 2026

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2027 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pre Budget Strategic Context

- Ireland's home care system is at a turning point. Despite record investment and delivery (26.7 million hours in 2025), waiting lists are rising, regional inequalities persist, and demand is projected to increase by up to 91% by 2040.
- The Bill to regulate home care will be signed into law this year, but progress has stalled on vital reforms like the Statutory Home Support Scheme, a national scheme for disaiblity home care and improvements to home carers terms and conditions.
- Without structural reform and sustained investment, the system risks failing to meet future need.

3 Key Priority Budget Priorities

1. **Fund 2 million additional hours of HSE Home Support.** (Older Persons)
   - Cost: €70m.
   - Why: Essential to meet demographic demand and tackle unmet need.
2. **Fund mileage payments for all home carers.** (Workforce)
   - Cost: €30m.
   - Why: Mileage payments are not funded by the HSE - increasing cost pressure on providers and carers, and exacerbating waiting lists in rural areas with longer travel time.
3. **Create a national disability home support scheme.** (Disabilities)
   - Cost: Administrative cost initially - future cost based on level of investment.
   - Why: A similar scheme exists for older persons and the failure to adopt this for disabilities risks creating a two tier home care service

Home & Community Care Ireland

2027 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION LIST OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Older Persons Recommendations

- Two millions additional hours of HSE Home Support.
- Tackle waiting lists & regional inequalities.
- Prioritise the Statutory Home Support Scheme.
- Roll out a client choice model in home care.
- Better housing options for older people.
- Explore Agetech & AI opportunities in home care.
- Demographic & resilience planning.

Home Care Workforce Recommendations

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- Regulate the home care sector.
- Implement a career pathway for home care.
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Disability Home Care Recommendations

- Create a national disability home support scheme.
- Increase investment in home care.
- Guarantee a legal right to home care.
- Publish disability home care waiting lists.
- Reform & regulate Personal Assistance services.

Home & Community Care Ireland

OLDER PERSONS

Pre-Budget Submission 2027

CARE FOR YOUR FUTURE

July 2026

By Home & Community Care Ireland

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Home & Community Care Ireland

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND OLDER PERSONS 2027 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

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- Older Persons
- Home Care Workforce
- Disability Home Care

Submissions available at www.hcci.ie.

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2026 HCCI Older Persons Pre-Budget Submission Policy Recommendations

1. TWO MILLION ADDITIONAL HOURS OF HSE HOME SUPPORT
2. TACKLE WAITING LISTS & REGIONAL INEQUALITIES
3. PRIORITISE THE STATUTORY HOME SUPPORT SCHEME
4. ROLLOUT A CLIENT CHOICE MODEL IN HOME CARE
5. BETTER HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE
6. EXPLORE AGETECH & AI OPPORTUNITIES IN HOME CARE
7. DEMOGRAPHIC & RESILIANCE PLANNING

HCCI Home & Community Care Ireland

HOME CARE IN IRELAND IN 2026

Pre-Budget Context:

- **Growth:** A record 26.7m hours of HSE Home Support was delivered in 2025, with independent providers able to sustain growth as demand for home care remains high. HCCI continues to see strong interest in membership.
- **Political momentum:** The Home Support Providers Bill will become law this year and regulate the sector, as home care remains prominient on the political agenda.
- **Concerns**: Waiting lists increased in 2025 despite record levels of investment - increasing regional disparties, as progress on implementing workforce reforms have largely stalled.

KEY STATISTICS

HSE Home Support 2025

26.7M
Hours Delivered

€838M
Budget 2025

68%
Hours delivered by independent providers

60,100
Clients

5,600
Total Waiting List

7%
Of over 65s recieve home support

TWO MILLION ADDITIONAL HOURS OF HOME SUPPORT

Policy Recommendation: Fund an additional two million hours of HSE Home Support for older persons to meet increased demand arising from Ireland's ageing population.

Cost: €70 million.

Rationale:

- Home Support is a cost effective service that supports over 60,000 older people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.
- While the sector has received welcome investment in recent years, Ireland's fast ageing population requires substantial additional investment each year to meet additional demands & avoid a backlog of waiting lists and unmet need.
- The important 2025 ESRI report *Projections of National Demand…for Older People's Care 2022-2040* projects demand for home support to increase by up 91% by 2040, necessitating strong annual growth.

Waiting Lists have remained consistent despite record levels of investment

HSE Home Support Waiting List 2020 to 2025

Waiting list data as of end of December each year

Chart: Home & Community Care Ireland • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

TACKLE WAITING LISTS & REGIONAL INEQUALITIES

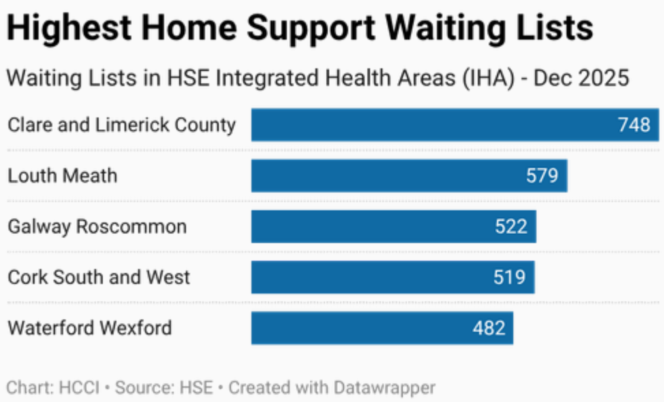
Policy Recommendation: Establish a HSE Home Support Waiting List Taskforce to tackle unmet need and regional inequalities in home care.

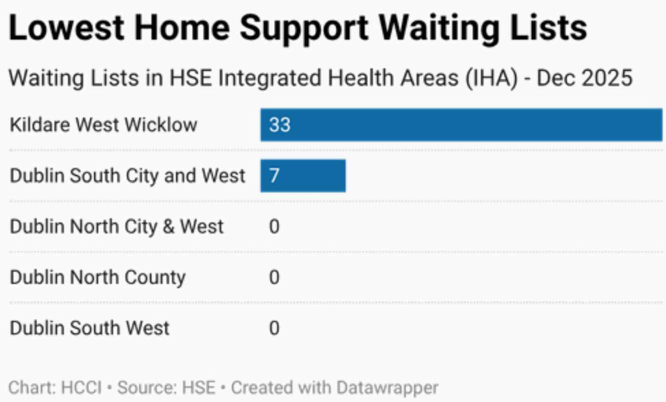
Cost: Administrative cost intitally, followed by targeted funding & investment in workforce in future budgets (See HCCI's Workforce Pre-Budget Submission).

Rationale:

- 5,600 older people were waiting for home support at the end of 2025.
- This is an increase from 2024 despite record investment.
- Between 2020 and 2026, the home support budget has nearly doubled, increasing from €490m to €920m, yet waiting lists are higher now than in 2020.
- Moreover, there are significant regional inequalities in waiting list. North Dublin has maintained a waiting list of zero since 2023, creating a stark divide between counties like Cork where the waiting list has consistently stayed at around 1,000 .

Home Care's Eircode Lottery





PRIORITISE THE STATUTORY HOME SUPPORT SCHEME

Policy Recommendation: Produce a roadmap for the full implementation of the Statutory Home Support Scheme before the end of this term of Government.

Rationale:

- The Statutory Home Support Scheme is a landmark programme of reforms for the home care sector that will introduce a transformative new social scheme that enables older and disabled people to remain living independently.
- The Scheme is eagerly awaited by the home care sector but despite successive Programme for Government commitments, the Scheme is now 5 years behind schedule.
- Implementing the Scheme requires a step change in approach to tackle the barriers that have stymied its development.

Statutory Scheme Components

✓ **Regulations**: The most advanced component - Bill will pass the Oireachtas in 2026 w/HIQA inspections from 2029.

? **Statutory Entitlement:** Although core to the Scheme, work on defining the level of entitlement to home care has largely been sidelined.

? **Future Funding Model:** Maintaining a fully exchequer funded model of HSE Home Support will be increasingly difficult as Ireland ages, necessitating the need to develop future funding options.

X **HSE Service Reform:** Reforms including commissioning reform, rolling out a single assessment tool & procuring a new ICT system are essential to the Scheme but have faced widespread delays.

ROLLOUT A CLIENT CHOICE MODEL IN HSE HOME SUPPORT

Policy Recommendations:

- Phase out the 'Fastest Finger First' Model in HSE Home Support referrals.
- Implement a nationwide client choice model , building on the existing Consumer Directed Home Support (CDHS) model.

Rationale:

- The process of referring HSE home support to approved independent providers, known as Fastest Finger First, generates operational inefficiencies like waiting lists, undermines person centred care and reduces client choice in their care planning.
- Fastest Finger First requires providers to respond to referrals within a matter of seconds, creating a competitive environment based on reaction time rather than aligning a client with a provider who is best suited to their care needs.

Client Choice in Home Support:

- Under a client choice model, information on providers is readily available so clients can make an informed decision on who delivers their care, has input into when their care is delivered and what care services they recieve.
- Ireland has a similar system - Consumer Directed Home Support, which has been in operation since 2018 but is not available nationwide.

Read HCCI Position Paper: *The Case for Changing the Fastest Finger First Model (2026)*

BETTER HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Policy Recommendation:

- Develop and implement an older persons housing strategy.

Rationale:

- The 2019 Department of Health/Housing's policy statement *Housing Options for our Ageing Population* identifies the limited stock of older persons housing options and commits to 40 actions to enable the provision of a variety of housing options for older people.
- Older people are increasingly impacted by the housing crisis, with charity *Alone* calling for urgent action to tackle the older persons housing crisis in 2026.
- While HCCI acknowledges that some progress has been made arising from the 2019 policy statement and Minister Kieran O'Donnell has committed to further action through a departmental working group, the absence of a clear strategy to guide public policy is preventing investment into older persons housing.

Older Persons Housing Options

Ageing in Place

Remaining at home . Supports include home care, adaptions & assistive technology

Independent Living

Purpose built for older people; retirement villages & sheltered housing.

Supported Living

Low to moderate supports. Includes assisted & co-living.

Nursing Home

Full time care in a residential setting for higher care needs

EXPLORE AGETECH & AI OPPORTUNITIES IN HOME CARE

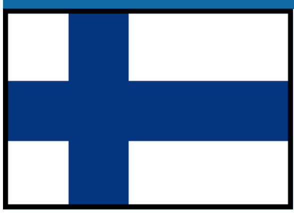
Policy Recommendations:

- Establish an advisory group to examine integration of technology (Agetech) into older persons care.
- Establish a separate advisory group focused on the use of AI in older persons care.

Rationale:

- Agetech, a category of digital and mechanical technology solutions aimed to prolong physical wellness, housing, wellbeing and independence in older people as well as to assist caregivers, is a thriving international industry.
- Ireland is an international laggard; some agetech like sensors, wearables and fall detectors are available but not offered in a standard home care package.
- Ireland lacks a national strategy and a procurement framework for agetech, and it is difficult to access more advanced solutions such as telehealth, remote monitoring and smart medication management that are readily available in many jurisdictions.
- The rapid growth of AI brings enormous opportunities to achieve efficiencies that would support caregivers and older people but also leaves clear potential for misuse. In 2024, academics and representatives from the adult care sector issued a statement on the responsible use of generative AI in adult social care.

AGETECH CASE STUDY: FINLAND



In 2026, HCCI visited Finland on the invitation of the Ministry of Health & Social Care to explore Finland's advanced agetech sector & explore opportunities for collaboration. Read our travel report **here**.

DEMOGRAPHIC & RESILIANCE PLANNING

Policy Recommendations:
- Develop a national home care strategy to support long term planning.
- Recognise home care as an essential front line service & undertake resliance planning for events that may distrupt service provision.

Rationale:

- Ireland is one of the fastest ageing populations in the EU, with the ESRI projecting that home care demand will increase by 91% by 2040.
- Meeting this demand will have significant cost implications for the exchequer and private individuals and will require coordination between stakeholders through a clear national strategy.
- It is also necessary to recognise home care as an essential frontline service and take measures to protect service provision during major events like red weather warnings or a recurrence of the 2026 fuel protests.
- Ireland lags behind jusristrictions like the UK, where providers & commissioners of care are obligated to have resiliance & continuity planning functions.

Proportion of Irelands population aged 65 and over

Ireland is one of fastest ageing populations in the EU

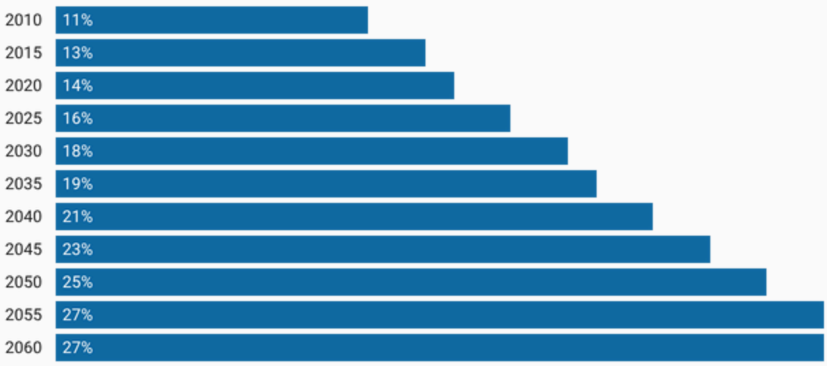


Chart: HCCI • Source: CSO & Eurostat • Created with Datawrapper

- The number of people aged 65+, currently 861,000 is set to double by 2050,
- The old age dependency ratio is projected to increase from 25% in 2027 to 49.8% in 2057.

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HOME CARE WORKFORCE

Pre-Budget Submission 2027

A NEW DEAL FOR CARERS

July 2026

By Home & Community Care Ireland

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HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND WORKFORCE PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

About HCCI's Pre-Budget Submissions

Home & Community Care Ireland (HCCI) is publishing three Pre-Budget Submissions in 2026, recognising the complexity and the importance we attach to 3 key issues impacting the home care sector:

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HCCI Workforce Pre-Budget Submission Policy Recommendations

1. FUND MILEAGE PAYMENTS FOR ALL HOME CARERS
2. PAY CARERS FOR CANCELLED CALLS
3. GUARENTEED LIVING WAGE FOR HOME CARERS
4. DEVELOP A HOME CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY
5. REGULATE THE HOME CARE SECTOR
6. IMPLEMENT A CAREER PATHWAY FOR HOME CARE
7. PRIORITISE CARERS ALLOWANCE REFORM
8. IMPLEMENT THE WORKING AGE PAYMENT
9. REMOVE HOME CARER EMPLOYMENT PERMIT QUOTAS

A NEW DEAL FOR CARERS

Pre-Budget Context:

- **Independent provider growth:** Independent providers delivered 16.9m hours of HSE Home Support in 2025, a 72% increase from 2019. This is evidence of improved recruitment and retention in the home care sector.
- **Lack of strategic planning:** With 5,600 people waiting for HSE home care & demand certain to increase further as Ireland ages, there is an urgent need to develop a workforce strategy to guide capacity planning.
- **Poor evidence base**: There is limited data on the home care workforce which is preventing evidence based strategic planning.

What HCCI is doing for home carers

- Advocated for the establishment of the Cross Departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group (2021).
- Advocated for funding for the living wage and travel time (2023).
- Launched 'A New Deal for Carers' campaign (2025).
- Partnering with LHP Skillnet & RCSI to develop a white paper on a career pathway for home carers (Ongoing).
- Partnering with LaMP to establsh an ethical migration framework for home care (Ongoing).
- Established the HCCI Carers Forum (2026).
- Publishing a workforce strategy for home care (2026).
- Establishing a carer registery to promote the role of home care worker (2027).

FUND MILEAGE PAYMENTS FOR ALL HOME CARERS

Policy Recommendation: Fund Mileage payments for all home care workers through the HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme.

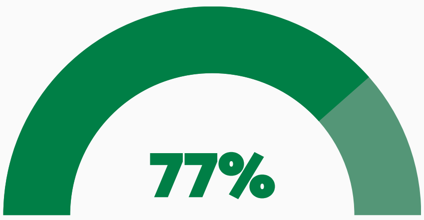
Cost: €30 million.

Rationale:

- Travel is essential to home care but mileage expenses are not funded on the HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme.
- Although unfunded, HCCI member providers do pay for travel expenses, but they cannot afford to pay standard civil service rates and the payment comes at the expense of investment in new services and other workforce measures.
- 77% of HCCI members report staff leaving or reducing hours due to higher travel costs.
- Funding mileage payments was a recommendation in the Department of Health's 2022 CDSWAG report on home care recruitment & retention but has yet to be sanctioned.

6.5

Average number of client visits per carer per day



of HCCI members report staff leaving or reducing hours due to higher fuel costs

26.7km

Average distance a carer spend travelling to clients each day

PAY CARERS FOR CANCELLED CALLS

Policy Recommendation: Pay home carers when a call is cancelled by a client.

Cost: Cost neutral

Rationale:

- Current HSE policy does not pay for a visit if it is cancelled with more than 8 hours notice - but providers must retain capacity to resume service instantly for 6 weeks without payment.
- This leaves home carers vulnerable to a loss of working hours and income.
- However, directly employed HSE home carers are paid for cancelled visits, while nursing homes are paid for up to one month when a resident is hospitalised.
- Through no fault of their own, the current policy discriminates against carers working for independent providers, prevents most carers from having a guaranteed income and is frequently cited by carers as a factor in leaving the sector.
- Further, as HSE home care is funded in advance, paying for cancelled calls would not require additional funding in Budget 2027.

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND

THE CARERS FORUM

HCCI is listening to our carers

In June 2026, HCCI launched the Carers Forum, a series of workshop engagements with home carers from our membership.

FUND A GUARENTEED LIVING WAGE FOR HOME CARERS

Policy Recommendation:

- Fund the Living Wage as a guaranteed minimum on the HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme.
- Increase funding in line with statutory employment cost rises.

Rationale:

- In 2023, the HSE Authorisation Scheme funded the living wage for home carers.
- However, since then, Authorisation Scheme funding has increased at a lower rate than the living wage and minimum wage, with providers also impacted by other new or increased statutory employment costs like sick pay and pension auto-enrollment.
- Other services including locum nursing receive automatic funding increases in line with statutory cost increases which provides reassurance to that workforce.
- Increasing pay in line with additional experience, training and responsibility is fundamental to attracting more home carers into the sector to meet additional demand.

DEVELOP A HOME CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Policy Recommendation: Develop a workforce strategy to support recruitment, retention & long term capacity planning in home care.

Rationale:

- Despite over €1 billion in exchequer funding and over 70,000 publicly funded home care users, there has never been a home care workforce strategy.
- This has left the sector vulnerable to recruitment and retention challenges in the context of higher demand for home care.
- Reforms to date have been ad hoc and there is a poor evidence base on the home care worker to inform policy development.
- The Department of Health's 2022 Cross Department Strategic Workforce Advisory Group recognised the need for workforce reform and has led to the implementation of positive measures like the payment of travel time but has stopped short of proposing the wholesale reform that the sector requires.

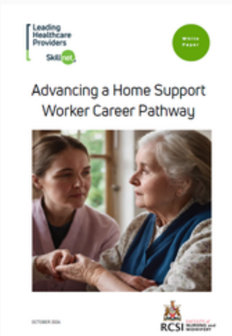
Coming Soon:
HCCI will publish our own home care workforce strategy at our Annual Conference in October 2026

IMPLEMENT A CAREER PATHWAY FOR HOME CARERS

Policy Recommendation: Implement a career pathway that incentives additonal training and responsibilities for home carers

Rationale:

- There is no defined career pathway for home carers in the public or independent home care sectors, with the HSE paying the same rate for all older person clients, regardless of their care needs or the carer's level of training.
- This means that if a home carer undertook specialised dementia training, it is not automatically rewarded.
- The UK recently launched a care workforce pathway with 8 roles ranging from 'New to Care' to 'Registered Manager'.
- This pathway encourages and rewards advanced training while providing confidence to service users that their care has the training required to meet their care needs.



Partnership with LHP Skillnet & Royal College of Surgeons Ireland

HCCI is partnering with LHP Skillnet & RCSI to develop a career pathway in home care, resulting in a 2024 white paper & RCSI receiving funding for The Attune Project to improve responsiveness in home care.

REGULATE THE HOME CARE PROFESSION

Policy Recommendation: Introduce to a home care worker registration system to regulate and recognise the profession.

Rationale:

- Unlike many health and social care professions, home care workers are not regulated under CORU.
- Introducing a registration system to regulate the profession would elevate the role of home care worker and recognise the vital work that home carers play in Ireland's health and social care service.
- It would further promote high standards of professional conduct, education and training.
- Ireland's ageing population adds urgency to need to regulate and promote the home care profession as demand is set to continue to rise in coming decades.

New HCCI Initiative: The Home Carers Register

HCCI is rolling out a register of home carers employed by HCCI members to improve evidence based workforce planning and to kick start the development of the home carer profession.

PRIORITISE CARERS ALLOWANCE REFORM

Policy Recommendation:

- Remove the means test for Carer's Allowance.
- Increase the working hour limit for Carer's Allowance.

Rationale:

- Means testing deters people from entering the workforce and forces those in employment to restrict working hours to stay within eligibility rules, with even small changes in their or their partners income impacting their Carer's Allowance payment.
- Home care workers in receipt of Carer's Allowance are limited to working 18.5 hours week, reducing their earning potential, restricting career development and leaving them ill equipped for life after Carer's Allowance.
- Reviewing Carer's Allowance so it does not disincentives employment was recognised in the Department of Health's CDSWAG report & removing the means test is a Programme for Government committment.

IMPLEMENT THE WORKING AGE PAYMENT

Policy Recommendation: Implement the Working Age Payment to address anomolies in Jobseekers Allowance.

Rationale:

- The current 'days worked' model, also known as the '3 day rule', disincentives part time home care workers by disqualifying a person from Jobseekers Allowance if they work just 1 hour a day.
- This means that people risk losing out on income by working, impacting home care which has a high proportion of part time workers.
- The Government has recognised this anomaly, with a public consultation on the Working Age Payment open at the time of writing.
- HCCI supports the Working Age Payment and advocate for quick implementation of the payment.

REMOVE QUOTAS FOR EMPLOYMENT PERMITS IN HOME CARE

Policy Recommendation: Remove the quota for employment permits in the home care sector.

Rationale:

- Home care workers became eligible for employment permits in 2022.
- Permit holders have since become an integral part of the home care workforce and have been a key part of the sector's recent growth.
- Recruitment from international jurisdictions will be essential to meeting future demand for home care as Ireland ages.
- However, despite their critical role in growing the workforce and the current shortage of home care workers, there is a quota on the number of home care workers.
- Similar sectors like nursing homes and hospitals have no quota for employment permits, despite the Government's clear policy of keeping people living in their homes for as long as possible.

Home & Community Care Ireland

DISABILITIES HOME CARE

Pre Budget Submission 2027

END THE SECOND TIER STATUS IN DISABILITY HOME CARE

July 2026

By Home & Community Care Ireland

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HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND DISABILITIES 2027 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

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2026 HCCI Older Persons Pre-Budget Submission Policy Recommendations

1. CREATE A NATIONAL DISABILTY HOME SUPPORT SCHEME
2. INCREASE INVESTMENT IN DISABILITY HOME CARE
3. GUARENTEE A LEGAL RIGHT TO HOME CARE
4. ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO HOME CARE
5. PUBLISH DISABILITY HOME CARE WAITING LISTS
6. REFORM & REGULATE PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY HOME CARE IN IRELAND

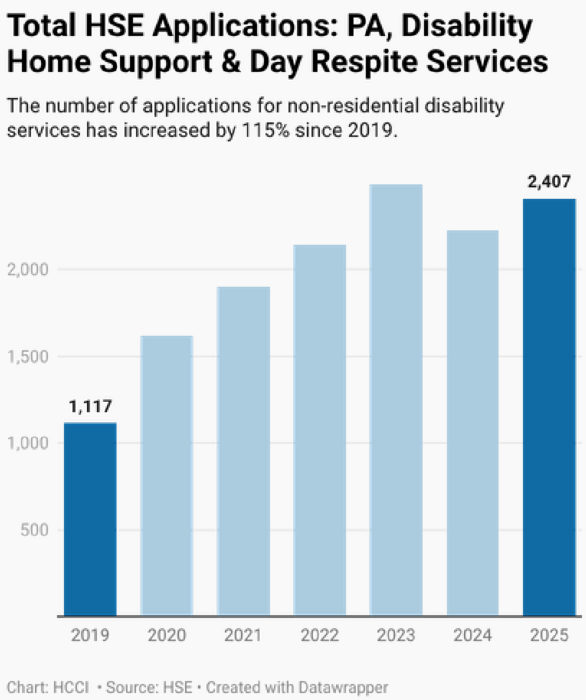
Pre-Budget Context:

- **Underinvestment:** Home care is an underutilised and undersized disability service, receiving 3%-5% of the disabilities budget compared to disability residential services which recieves nearly 60% of the budget.
- **Second tier service:** Disability home care also lags behind older persons home care, with 1% of people with disabilities recieving home care compared to 7% of over 65s.
- **Delays:** Critical reforms have been delayed, including the Statutory Home Support Scheme to regulate and provide a legal entitlement to home care and the HSE's Disability Authorisation Scheme, which would create a national home care scheme for disabilities and improve funding and service efficiency.

Disability Home Care Services

Service	No. of Service Users	2026 Budget
HSE Disability Home Support (DHS)	7,251	€90m*
HSE Personal Assistance (PA)	2,868	€47m*
HSE Paediatric Homecare Packages	400	€47m
HSE Complex Cases	Ad-hoc	Unknown
U65 Transition to Community	More than 100 transitions to date.	€208k per transition
Private Pay	Unknown	Unknown

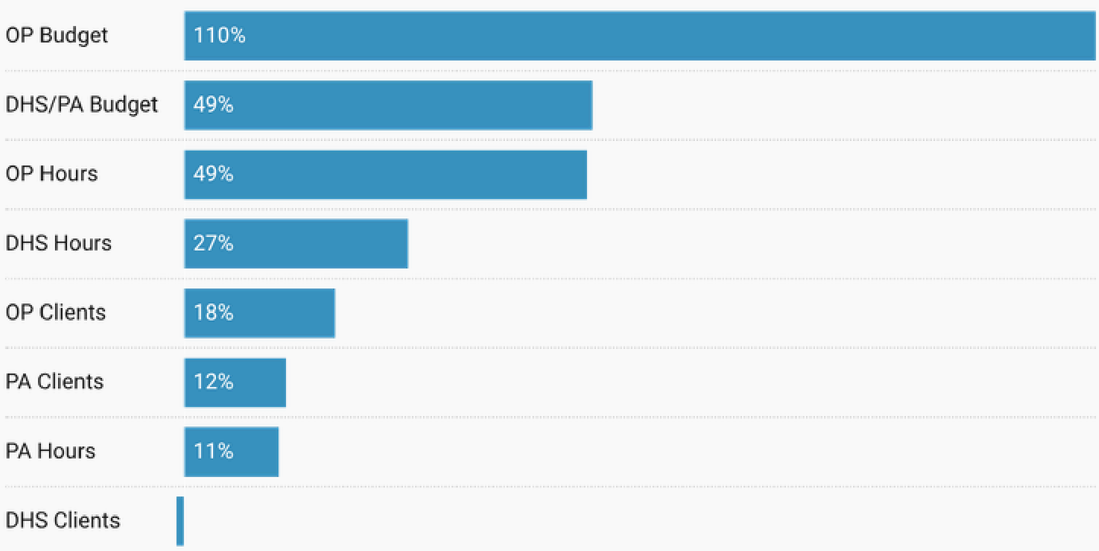
**Estimated - HSE do not regularly publish this data.*



THE DISABILITY DEFICT:
HOW DISABILITY HOME CARE LAGS BEHIND OTHER SERVICES

Trends: % change in HSE home care provisions 2019 - 2025

There has been significantly less investment growth in DHS & PA compared to older persons



OP = HSE Older Persons Home Care; DHS = HSE Disability Home Support; PA = Personal Assistance

Chart: Home & Community Care Ireland • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

- HSE Disability Home Support (DHS) & Personal Assistance (PA) lags behind HSE Older Persons Home Care (OP) on every available metric.
- HSE OP has seen more than twice the rate of investment than HSE DHS & PA.
- The budget for OP is more than 6x larger than DHS & PA combined.
- 7% of over 65s receive HSE home care compared to under 1% of people with disabilities.
- DHS & PA's estimated €137m budget is approx. 3% of the total budget for disability services, compared to residential care's budget of €2.2bn which accounts for 57% of the disabilities budget.
- €32.73 per hour is the standard rate for DHS & PA. An intensive home care package (56 hours p/week) costs approx. €92k per annum while a disability residential package costs in the region of €366k per annum.

CREATE A NATIONAL DISABILITY HOME SUPPORT SCHEME

Policy Recommendation: Create a National HSE Disability Home Support Scheme with standardised eligibility, assessment and funding processes.

Rationale:

- Current disability home support is fragmented and inconsistent, leading to an Eircode lottery of provision.
- The lack of a dedicated scheme disincentivises investment into disability home support, stymying growth and strategic planning in the sector.
- A similar national scheme exists for HSE Older Persons Home Support. The failure to adopt a similar scheme for disabilities risks creating a two tier home care sector that favours older persons care over disabilitity provision.

Regional Breakdown: HSE Disability Home Support & Personal Assistance

Data refers to Q1 to Q3 2025 - The HSE have not published full year data for DHS & PA.

RHA	No. of People with a Disability	PA Hours	PA Clients	DHS Hours	DHS Clients	Total DHS & PA Hours	Total DHS & PA Clients	Total Clients p/1000 People w/ a Disability
HSE Dublin & North East	241,130	222,444	227	993,103	2,073	1,215,547	2,300	9.54
HSE Dublin & Midlands	230,420	243,849	478	477,097	1,238	720,946	1,716	7.45
HSE Dublin & South East	218,239	161,521	441	595,416	1,400	756,937	1,841	8.44
HSE Mid West	162,399	310,009	475	265,320	669	575,329	1,144	7.04
HSE South West	91,612	132,521	600	254,539	720	387,060	1,320	14.41
HSE West & North West	165,757	349,467	719	530,101	1,456	879,568	2,175	13.12
Total	**1,109,557**	**1,419,811**	**2,940**	**3,115,575**	**7,556**	**4,535,386**	**10,496**	**9.46**

Table: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN DISABILITY HOME SUPPORT & PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Policy Recommendation: Increase investment in HSE Disability Home Support & Personal Assistance by at least 25%.

Cost: €35 million.

Rationale:

- Increasing the size of the disabilities home care sector is vital for meeting commitments in the Programme for Government, Sláintecare and the Government's Disability Action Plan.
- While the sector has received some additional investment in recent years, it pales in comparison to the level of investment in older persons home care.
- Committing to a substantial increase in investment would tackle unmet need and support decongregation of under 65s from nursing homes, as highlighted in the 2021 *Wasted Lives* Ombudsman report.

Disability Home Support & Personal Assistance Provision

Hours Delivered 2018 to 2025

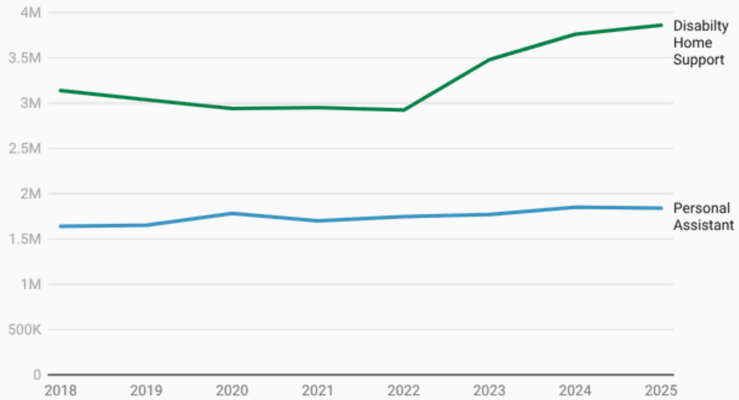


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

Slow Growth

While the overall budget for disability services has more than doubled since 2018, DHS & PA lag behind, with provision increasing by 27% & 11% respectively.

GUARENTEE A LEGAL RIGHT TO HOME CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Policy Recommendation: Guarantee a legal entitlement to home care for people with disabilities through the Statutory Home Support Scheme.

Rationale:

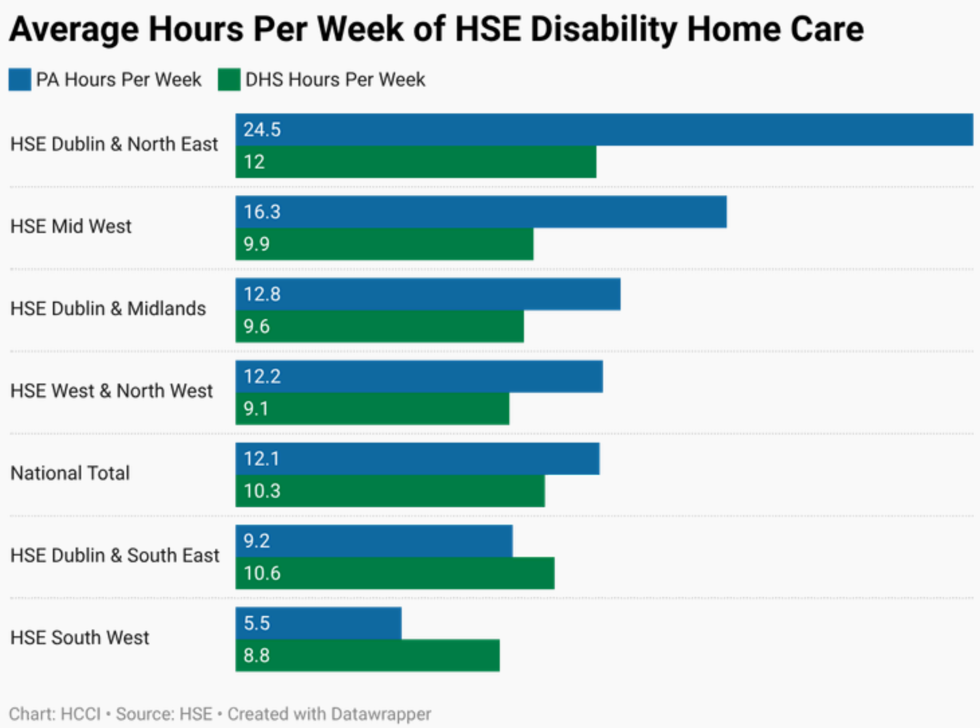
- Establishing a strong legal right to home care would be a transformative reform in disabilitilies care - signalling a fundimental shift from residential bias towards community care and independent living for people with disabilities.
- It would provide a legal foundation for long-term system planning and investment into disability home care.
- This would satisfy a host of commitments including the Programme for Government, Sláintecare and UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities.

ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO HOME CARE

Policy Recommendation: Guarentee equal access & provision of disability home support and personal assistance services.

Rationale:

- There are significant regional variations in the provision of HSE Disability Home Support and Personal Assistance services which undermines principles of fairness, universality and Sláintecare.
- Service users in the Dublin & North East HSE region can expect to receive more than 4x the number of PA hours and 36% more disability home support hours than service users in the HSE South West region - with similar disparities in other regions.



PUBLISH DISABILITY HOME CARE WAITING LISTS & TACKLE UNMET NEED

Policy Recommendation: Publish waiting lists for HSE Disability Home Support and PA and make the HSE regions accountable for unmet need

Rationale:

- While the HSE regularly acknowledge that there is significant unmet need for Disability Home Support and PA, they do not maintain a waiting list meaning there is no transparency around the level of unmet need.
- Publishing waiting lists and holding HSE regions accountable for reducing unmet need is relatively straighforward and would not require substantial investment.
- Moreover, waiting lists are common for other services including older persons home care and acute care, where they are used to promote transparency and accountability.

REFORM & REGULATE PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Policy Recommendation: Complete the work of the PA Review Group and include PA within the home support regulatory framework.

Rationale:

- Personal Assistance services lack a clear national policy framework and regulatory structure, undermining quality, workforce stability and user outcomes.
- The HSE have established a PA Review Group to define and standardise PA and to develop a national protocol for eligibility and allocation of PA.
- However, the PA Review Group has not met for a number of months.
- Meanwhile, legislation to regulate home care for older people and people with disabilities will pass the Oireachtas in Summer 2026.
- HCCI is concerned that regulating all forms of home care, other than PA, will leave potential for abuse including the reclassification of services by unscrupulous providers in order to shirk their regulatory responsibilities.