

HOME SUPPORT IN IRELAND 2025

HOME CARE DATA SERIES ISSUE FIVE

BY HOME & COMMUNITY CARE IRELAND

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HSE HOME SUPPORT WAITING LISTS IN 2025

HSE Home Support waiting lists were effectively unchanged in 2025, with 5,600 people waiting for home care at the end of the year, an increase of 4 people compared to December 2024.

Waiting lists remain stubbornly high despite record provision of 25.55 million hours of home support in 2025 and a record budget of €838 million.

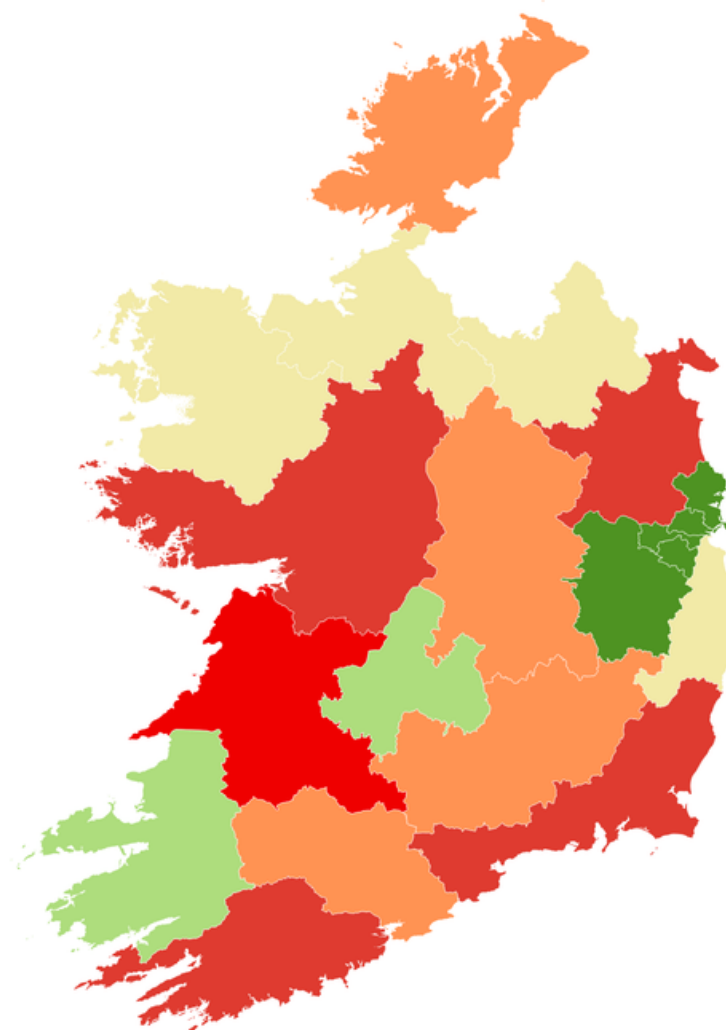
2025 data shows a continuation of post-covid trends. Waiting lists have stayed above 5,000 since mid 2021, while regional disparities increase - confirming the Eircode lottery of home care access as rural areas face high waiting lists and longer waiting times compared to Dublin and a small number of other regions.

There are significant regional variations in waiting lists

HSE Home Support Waiting Lists Totals by HSE Integrated Health Area

Waiting List Dec 2025

< 110 110-224 224-318 318-482 482-748 ≥ 748



Map: HCCI • Source: HSE FOI • Created with Datawrapper

HIGHS & LOWS: REGIONAL WAITING LIST INSIGHTS

Waiting lists are now measured by HSE Health Region and Integrated Health Area (IHA) rather than by Community Health Organisation and Local Health Office due to a 2025 HSE Sláintecare reorganisation.

Highest IHA - Clare & Limerick County (748 Waiting):

Clare & Limerick County has the highest waiting list of any HSE IHA, after a worrying 28% increase since January 2025. Neighbouring Limerick City IHA has a significantly lower waiting list of 130; further evidence of the regional inequalities in home care.

Concerning Trends - Louth/Meath (579 Waiting):

Waiting lists in the Louth/Meath IHA have increased by 210% since mid 2024. This follows a late 2024 decision to introduce care rationing in these counties, which may still be having an impact on provision.

Highest Home Support Waiting Lists

Waiting Lists in HSE Integrated Health Areas (IHA) - Dec 2025

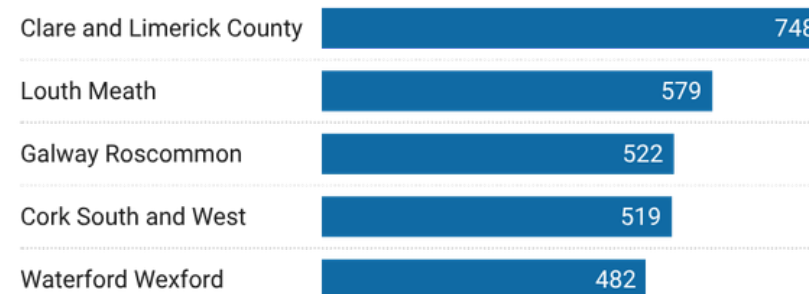


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

Lowest Home Support Waiting Lists

Waiting Lists in HSE Integrated Health Areas (IHA) - Dec 2025

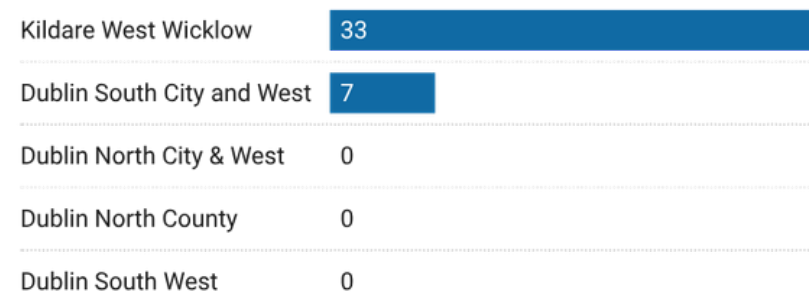


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

Urgent Action Needed - HSE West & North West Region (Total 1,380 Waiting):

Covering Donegal (346 waiting), Galway/Roscommon (522), Mayo (288) & Sligo/Leitrim (244), West & North West has the highest waiting list of any HSE Health Region, as well as the highest percentage of people aged 65 and older.

Perennially High - Cork (Total 915 Waiting):

High waiting lists and lengthy waiting times for home care provision is a long term problem in Cork. The HSE has acknowledged the issue, noting that Cork provides service to over 6,000 older people and said it has responded with further investment in recruitment and retention.

Countdown to Zero: Dublin & Kildare:

4 Dublin IHAs recorded zero people waiting for at least one month in 2025, while Kildare's waiting list never exceeded 50. No other IHAs reported a waiting list below 100.

Cork has the highest waiting list of any county in Ireland

Cork LHO HSE Home Support Waiting List 2018 to 2025

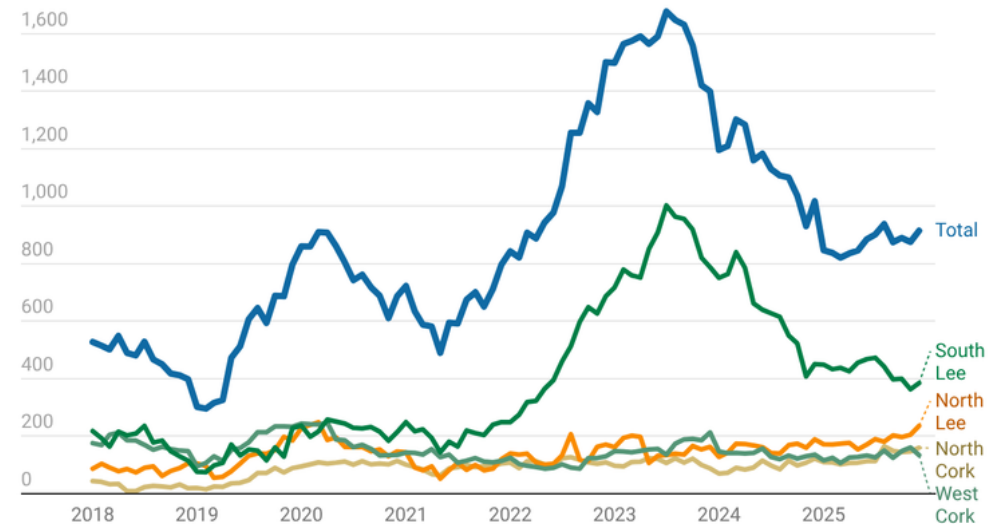


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

DIG DEEPER ON WAITING LISTS

How long are people waiting?

While no national data exists for waiting times, local data obtained by parliamentary questions paints a mixed picture that further deepens the regional inequalities in Ireland's home care sector.

Nearly half of people are waiting at least six months for home care in Cork. 35% wait longer than six months in Donegal. In Kerry the average wait is between 19 and 34 weeks. However, North Dublin processes new applicants within two to seven working days.

Waiting for new versus additional service:

60% of the 5,600 people on the waiting list are receiving a level of service that is below their full allocation. 40% are receiving no home care.

Half of people wait longer than 6 months for home care in Cork & Kerry

Waiting times for HSE Home Support in HSE South West Region - January 2025

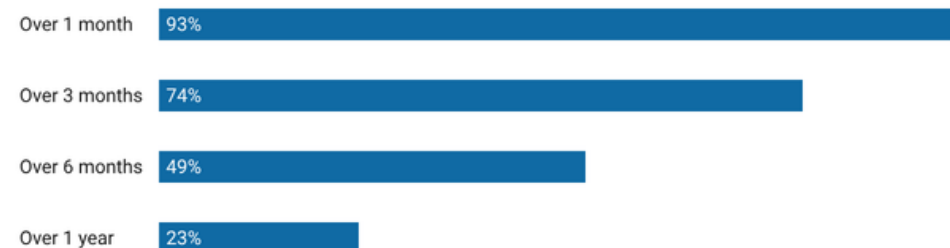


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE PQ 8748/25 • Created with Datawrapper

60% of people on the waiting list have some level of service but are waiting for additional hours

Waiting list for new & additional HSE Home Support - December 2025

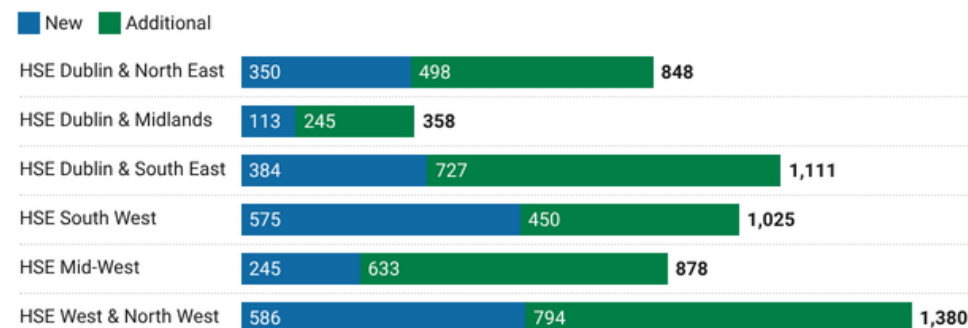


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

People may receive partial service if the HSE only operates a Monday to Friday schedule, there are challenges finding an Independent provider to deliver care on weekends/unsocial hours and/or if the person lives in a home care blackspot where there are long term capacity challenges.

Adjusting for population:

Given the wide population ranges between HSE Health Regions & IHAs, it is necessary to analyse waiting lists relative to the number of older persons in that area.

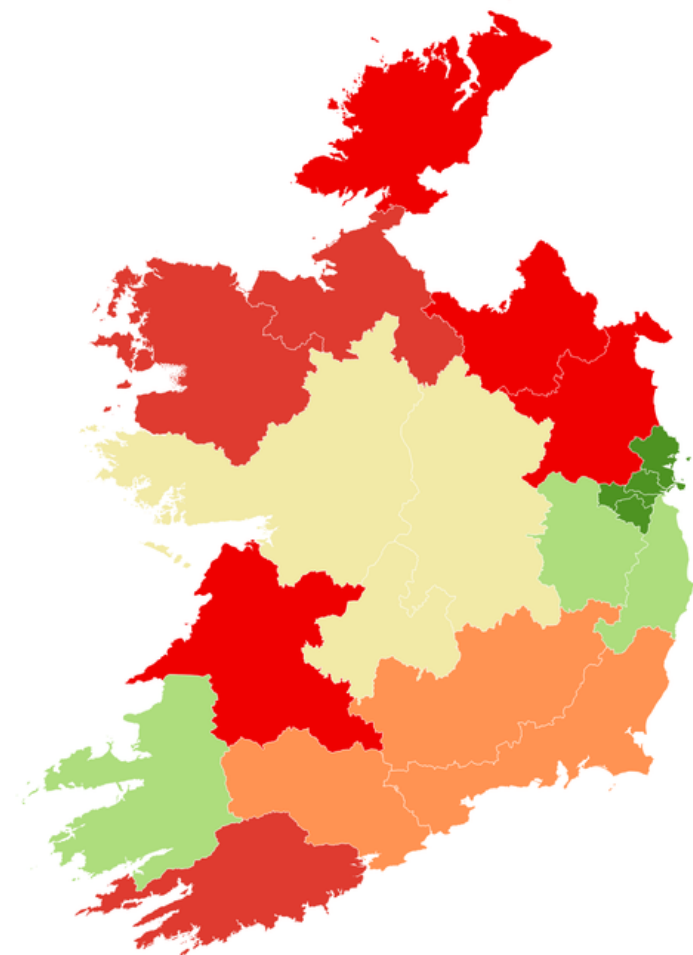
Counties in the West & North West such as Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan and Mayo have higher waiting lists relative to their populations than their totals first suggest. On the other hand, Galway/Roscommon has the third highest total waiting list but only the 11th highest relative to population.

Home Support Waiting List Relative to Population

Waiting list per every 1,000 people aged 65 or over

Waiting List Dec 2025

< 0 0-4 4-9 9-10 10-12 ≥ 12



Map: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

HOME SUPPORT DELIVERY IN 2025

25.5 million hours of HSE Home Support were delivered in 2025, a 7% increase from 2024. Independent providers were responsible for virtually all of the increased capacity - delivering 68% of hours nationally.

All regions exceeded delivery targets. However, Dublin regions averaged 10% above target, compared to 2% for the 3 non-Dublin regions.

Regional inequalities are also apparent in the number of hours delivered to clients. An older person in Dublin & North East can expect to receive 35% more hours of home support than a client in the Mid West.

The number of older people receiving home support increased by 3% to 60,463 as of December 2025.

All HSE Health Regions exceeded delivery targets

Home Support delivery by HSE Health Region 2025

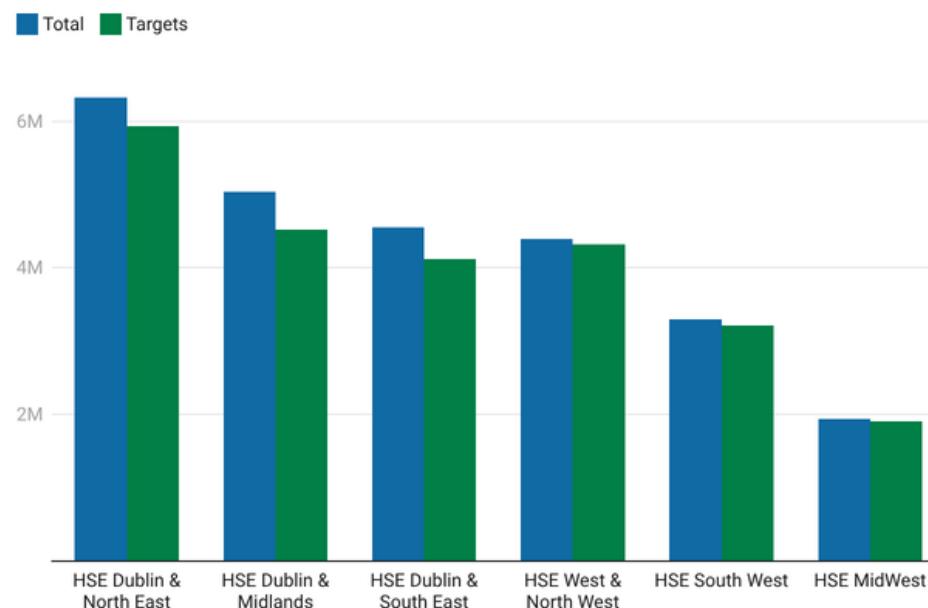


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

HSE & Independent provision differs across health regions

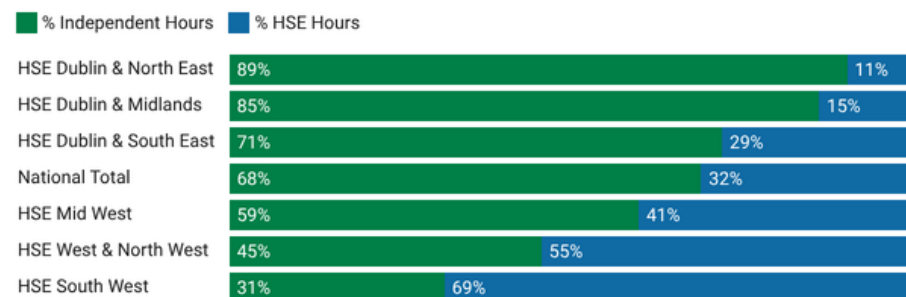


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE FOI • Created with Datawrapper

TRENDS & ANALYSIS

Areas with more Independent sector delivery perform better:

The HSE continues to face significant challenges increasing their own home support delivery, while Independent providers are proving more successful at recruiting and retaining home carers to add capacity.

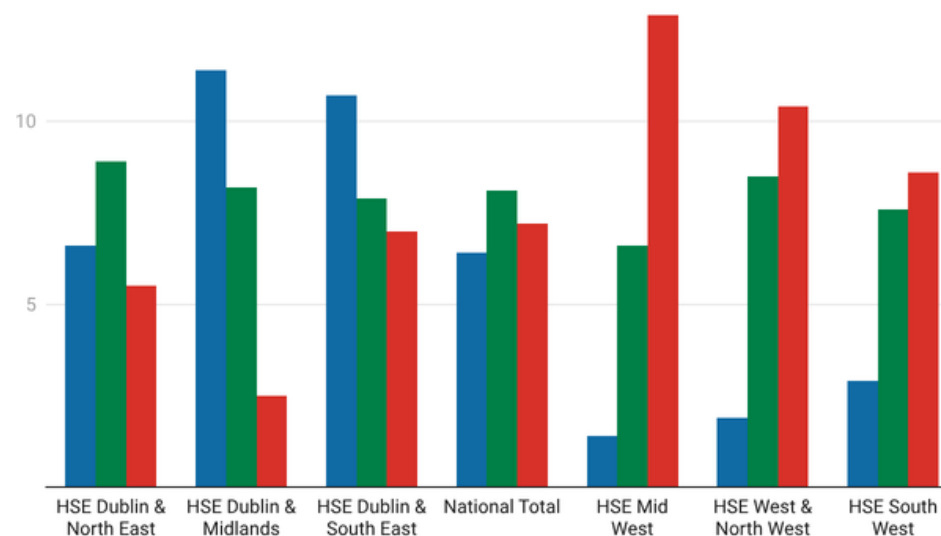
In the 3 Dublin HSE Health Regions, (including most of Leinster) where Independent providers deliver more than 70% of hours, older people face lower waiting lists, reduced waiting times and receive more home support hours than in the HSE South West, Mid West & West/North West Regions.

In areas of HSE high delivery, Independent providers are generally not increasing their delivery to substitute for lower HSE capacity.

Regions with more Independent provision have higher capacity and lower waiting lists

All regions exceeded delivery targets but there is significant regional variations in capacity and waiting lists

■ Delivery vs Targets Variance (%) ■ Hours per week ■ Waiting List per 1,000 People 65+



HCCI calculations based on HSE FOI & Management Report Data

Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

High waiting lists in rural areas highlights the need for a national mileage scheme for carers:

The gap between Dublin & the rest of the country has extended, with the majority of IHAs seeing increased waiting lists in 2025. The average waiting list in a Dublin HSE IHA is 49, compared to 357 outside the capital - highlighting the need for a national mileage scheme to support carers to travel longer distances between clients.

Waiting times needs to be tackled:

Analysing the length of time people wait for home support is just as important as the number of people who are waiting. On the west coast, you can expect to wait months for home support, but in Dublin waiting times are measured in days. Kerry may have reduced its waiting list from 381 to 110 but the average person waits 19 weeks for their home support to begin.

Results from a HCCI survey on the need for mileage payments



26.7km

Average distance a carer
spend travelling to clients
each day



6.5

Average number of client
visits per carer per day

Home care is a success story but investment must continue:

The huge growth in home support capacity, from 17 million hours in 2018 to 25.5 million hours in 2025, is an impressive achievement for the sector and one of the major policy successes emerging from Sláintecare to date.

Although unmet need and staff shortages are still a reality, over 60,000 people now receive home support, with the hours allocated to them increasing. With major reforms like regulation and the Statutory Home Support Scheme in progress, Ireland is well set to build a world leading home care sector.

However, the number of people aged 65+ is set to double by 2050 and the latest ESRI research projects demand for home support by up to 91% by 2040. This must be matched by continued investment in the sector or Ireland will face an aged care crisis in the future.

Home Support has grown considerably since 2018

HSE Home Support Provision 2018 to 2025 (millions of hours).

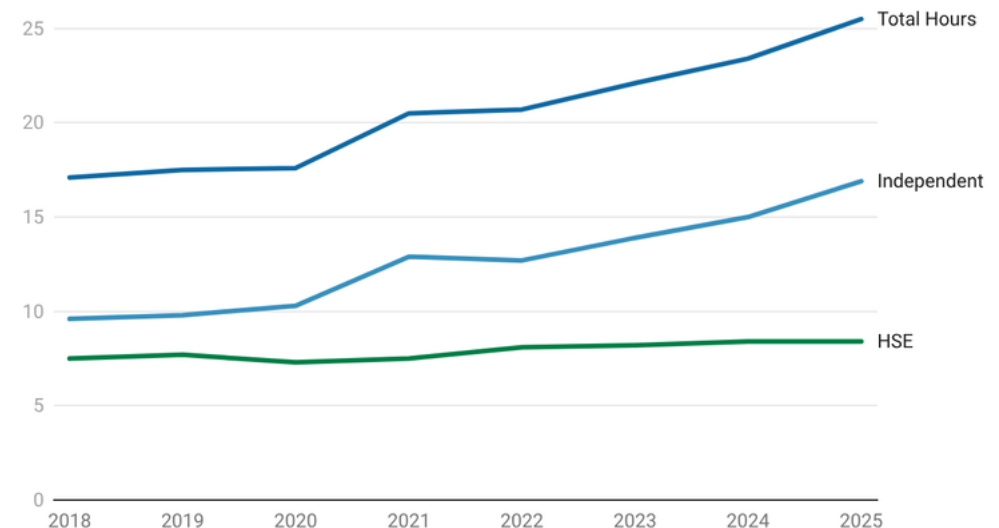


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

HSE reorganisation leads to transparency issues:

Beginning from 2025, the HSE reorganised its structure, meaning that waiting lists are now measured across 6 HSE Health Regions & 20 Integrated Health Area (IHA) rather than the old structure of 9 Community Health Organisation & 32 Local Health Offices.

This has resulted in more counties being grouped together, making it more difficult to ascertain waiting list blackspots. For example Louth & Meath are now one IHA while IHA Midlands covers Laois, Longford, Offaly & Westmeath. The population of IHAs range from 114,000 to 421,000.

The HSE have refused to provide IHA waiting list and delivery data that was previously accessible through parliamentary questions. As a result, HCCI issued freedom of information requests to obtain the waiting list data used in this report, but we were not granted IHA delivery data.

HSE Home Support Clients 2025

■ HSE Dublin & North East
 ■ HSE Dublin & Midlands
 ■ HSE Dublin & South East
 ■ HSE West & North West
 ■ HSE South West
 ■ HSE Mid-West

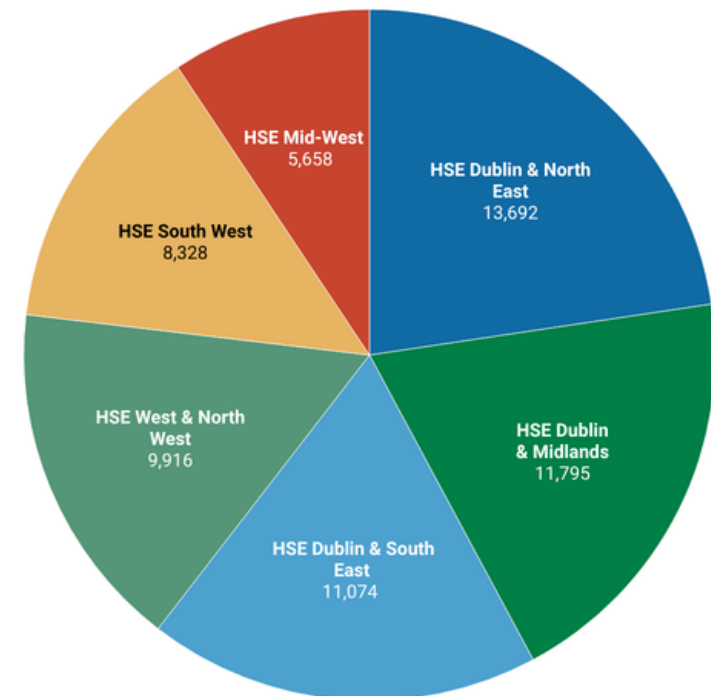


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

DISCUSSION: ‘EIRCODE LOTTERY’ OF HOME SUPPORT TO ACCELERATE WITHOUT INVESTMENT IN WORKFORCE & TARGETED MEASURES

2025 was another record year for home support, with over 60,000 older people receiving over 25.5 million hours of home support, against a budget of €838 million.

Although investment increased by over €100 million and more than a million hours of capacity were added, waiting list increased marginally in 2025.

This follows a clear trend; between 2021 and 2025, the budget for home support increased by €171 million, capacity increased by 5 million hours and the number of clients receiving home support increased by over 6,000 older people.

Despite record investment & increased delivery, waiting lists have stayed consistent since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic

HSE Home Support Waiting List (Older People) 2021 to 2025

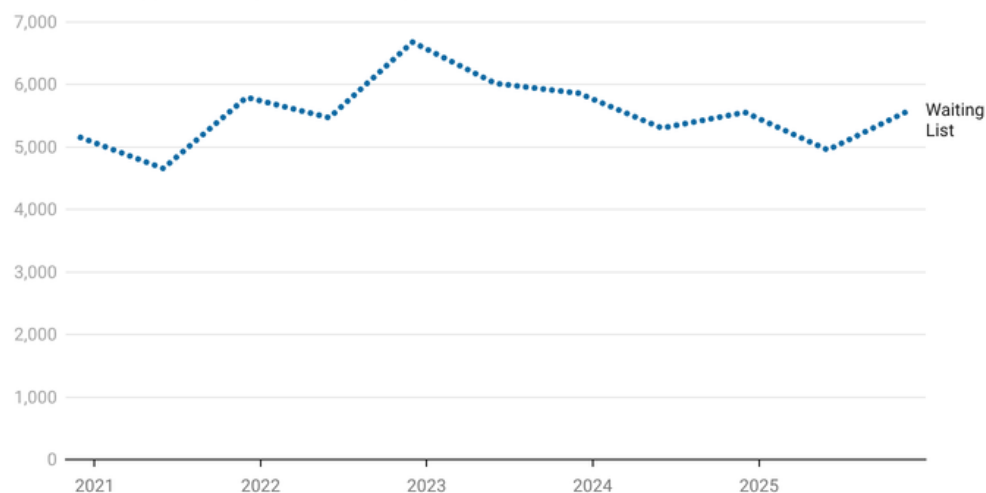


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

Despite that, waiting lists have increased and have not dropped below 5,000 since the end of Covid-19 restrictions.

These trends show that increased investment will not automatically reduce waiting lists - something that should concern policymakers given that the population of people aged 65+ is set to increase sharply in the coming decades.

Firstly, Ireland needs to invest in its home care workforce. In our Pre-Budget Submission, HCCI argues for 'a new deal for carers' - a package of increased pay, benefits, improvements to training and career structure and supply & demand forecasting.

Introducing a national mileage scheme is central to reducing waiting lists, particularly in rural areas where carers travel long distances between clients and where waiting lists are higher.

Ireland can expect demand for home care to increase each year for the foreseeable future

Projected population aged 65 years and over by age group and year ('000)

■ 65 - 69 years ■ 70 - 74 years ■ 75 - 79 years ■ 80 - 84 years ■ 85 years and over

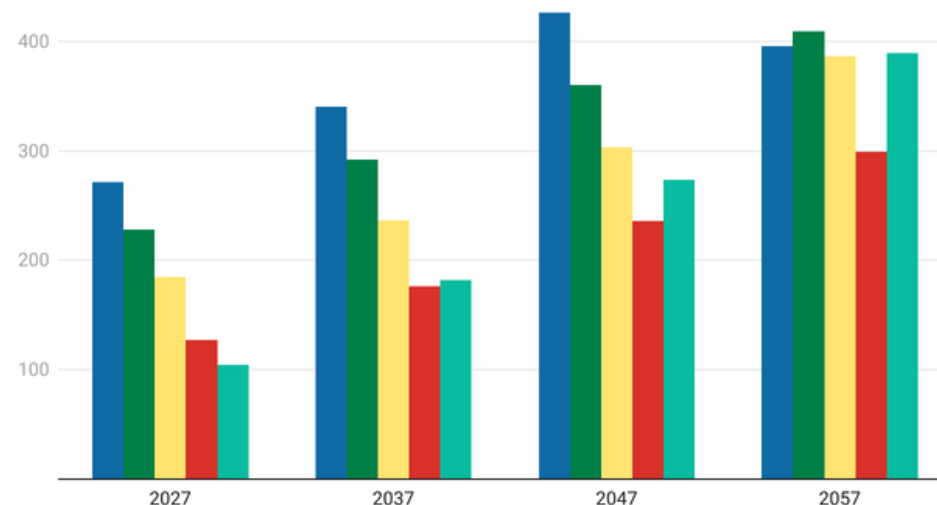


Chart: HCCI • Source: CSO • Created with Datawrapper

To avoid consolidating a two tier home care sector, the HSE should then adopt a 'zero waiting list' policy, under which no older person would wait longer than a month for their HSE home support service to begin.

Achieving a zero waiting list is possible. Waiting lists have not exceeded 10 people in North Dublin (including the City and rural north) since 2023. 3 Dublin IHAs ended 2025 with zero people waiting (Dublin South West reported 7 waiting).

Elsewhere, only 33 people are waiting for home care in Kildare/West Wicklow, compared to 579 in Meath/Louth. Limerick City & Kerry have successfully brought waiting list down to around 100.

Meanwhile, virtually all counties not mentioned above face challenges accessing home support because of high waiting lists, lengthy waiting times and/or stagnant capacity growth.

North Dublin rapidly reduced its waiting list & often has zero people waiting for home support

HSE Home Support Waiting List CHO 9/Dublin North East Health Region 2018 to 2025

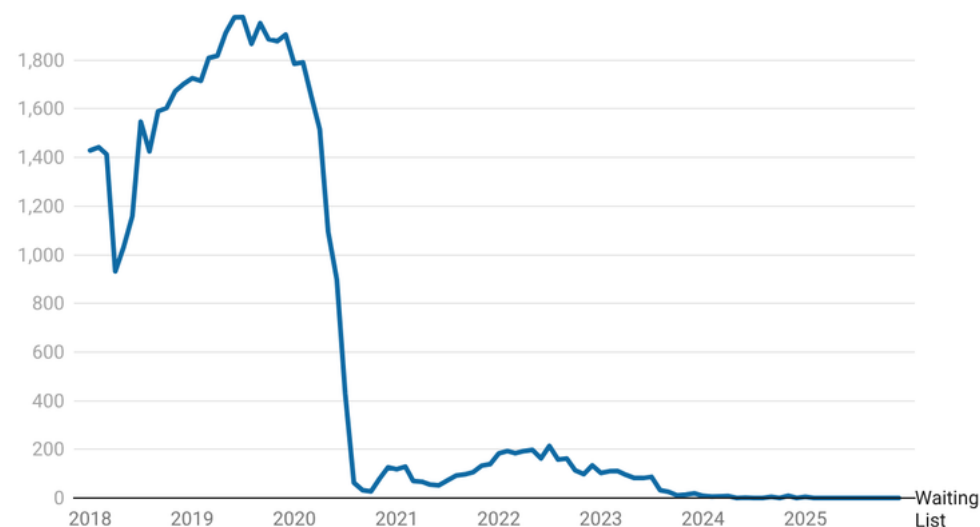


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

Between the start of 2021 and the end of 2025, the average waiting list in Cork was 906, in Wexford/Waterford it was 708, Galway/Roscommon's average was 366, 265 in Cavan/Monaghan and 236 in Mayo. It has never been easy to access home support in any of these counties.

The Government can no longer be acquiescent in its approach to waiting lists and hope that the Health Regions will sort their capacity issues alone.

HCCI have long called for a home support waiting list taskforce to examine the relative performance of Health Regions, learn from high performing areas, produce an action plan and implement targeted interventions.

A similar taskforce is currently focused on waiting lists in acute and primary care. Given Ireland's rapidly ageing population and strong demand for older persons care, it is time home support waiting lists get the policy attention it needs.

Home Care Blackspots? Some counties face persistent waiting lists

Average Annual HSE Home Support Waiting List 2021 to 2025

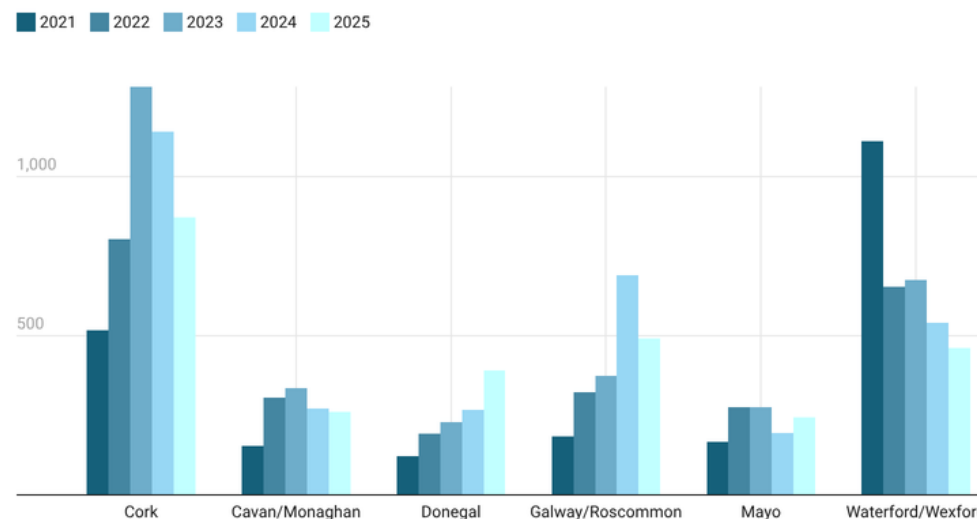


Chart: HCCI • Source: HSE • Created with Datawrapper

HSE Home Support Waiting List & Delivery Data 2025

Data from HCCI Freedom of Information Requests, HSE Management Reports & CSO Census 2022.

IHA	Health Region	Total Population	No. Aged Over 65	% Aged Over 65	No. of Home Support Clients	Average Waiting List 2025	Waiting List per/1000 People Aged 65+	Total Delivery 2025	% Independent Delivery	% HSE Delivery
Cavan Monaghan	HSE Dublin & North East	142,452	22,339	15.7%		261	12.0			
Dublin North City & West	HSE Dublin & North East	396,039	45,797	11.6%		0	0.0			
Dublin North County	HSE Dublin & North East	284,727	39,467	13.9%		0	0.0			
Louth Meath	HSE Dublin & North East	363,864	47,282	13.0%		495	12.2			
Health Region Total	HSE Dublin & North East	1,187,082	154,885	13.0%	13,692	756	5.5	6,320,740	89	11
Dublin South City and West	HSE Dublin & Midlands	343,616	42,230	12.3%		7	0.2			
Dublin South West	HSE Dublin & Midlands	208,621	27,838	13.3%		90	0.0			
Kildare West Wicklow	HSE Dublin & Midlands	207,403	25,211	12.2%		32	1.3			
Midlands	HSE Dublin & Midlands	317,999	46,637	14.7%		256	6.8			
Health Region Total	HSE Dublin & Midlands	1,077,639	141,916	13.1%	11,795	385	2.5	5,032,667	85	15
Carlow Kilkenny and Tipperary South	HSE Dublin & South East	246,765	40,970	16.6%		272	9.6			
Dublin South and Wicklow	HSE Dublin & South East	421,373	68,502	16.3%		151	3.4			
Waterford Wexford	HSE Dublin & South East	302,955	50,121	16.5%		462	9.6			

HSE Home Support Waiting List & Delivery Data 2025

Data from HCCI Freedom of Information Requests, HSE Management Reports & CSO Census 2022.

IHA	Health Region	Total Population	No. Aged Over 65	% Aged Over 65	No. of Home Support Clients	Average Waiting List 2025	Waiting List per/1000 People aged 65+	2025 Total	% Independent Delivery	% HSE Delivery
Cork North and East	HSE South West	284,323	42,216	14.8%		313	9.4			
Cork South and West	HSE South West	299,833	47,245	15.8%		559	11.0			
Kerry	HSE South West	156,458	29,567	18.9%		103	3.7			
Health Region Total	HSE South West	740,614	119,028	16.0%	8,328	976	8.6	3,302,571	31	69
Clare and Limerick County	HSE Mid-West	219,772	37,864	17.2%		651	19.8			
Limerick City and Tipperary North	HSE Mid-West	193,287	30,441	15.7%		155	4.3			
Health Region Total	HSE Mid-West	413,059	68,305	16.5%	5,658	806	12.9	1,936,923	59	41
Donegal	HSE West & North West	159,227	28,130	17.7%		391	12.3			
Galway Roscommon	HSE West & North West	347,996	55,927	16.1%		493	9.3			
Mayo	HSE West & North West	137,970	27,328	19.8%		243	10.5			
Sligo Leitrim West Cavan	HSE West & North West	114,459	21,203	18.5%		200	10.6			
Health Region Total	HSE West & North West	759,652	132,588	17.4%	9,916	1,327	10.4	4,396,817	55	45
National	National Total	5,149,139	776,315	15.1%	60,463	5,133	7.2	25,546,799	68	32