The Home Care Sector in Ireland

2026 Quarterly Snapshot

October 2026



Home Support Providers Act 2026 - Update

The Health (Amendment) Home Support Providers Act 2026 was enacted on 1 July 2026, following signature by the President. However, it has not yet been commenced, and its substantive provisions are not yet in force. Commencement will take place by Ministerial Order, which is expected to follow the finalisation of the supporting regulations and HIQA standards required to implement the new regulatory framework.

Under the new framework, home support providers will be required to comply with regulations and will be assessed against National Standards for Home Support that are to be set by HIQA.

Latest Progress Update[1]

The Minister of State at the Department of Health noted the following in July, in relation to further implementation work required following enactment of the Act:

- The Department is progressing secondary legislation (regulations) with HIQA and the sector, and final amendments have been incorporated into the draft regulations following public consultation and stakeholder engagement, to strengthen safety, quality and public confidence in line with international best practice.
- The Department continues to work on the future funding of home care, reforms to the service delivery model, and initiatives to address workforce recruitment and retention challenges across the sector. The Minister has noted that "*The Department is researching different funding models which will form an important part of the evidence base for the development of a sustainable funding model for home care services and has commissioned several reports from the ESRI and the European Observatory on Health Systems. It is important to note that no decision on future funding options has been made, and further research is underway.*"

For commencement of the Act, the following need to be in place:

- Ministerial regulations
- HIQA standards
- Registration processes
- Inspection frameworks
- Guidance for providers
- Transitional arrangements for existing operators.



Sources and notes:

1. Home Help Service – Tuesday, 14 Jul 2026 – Ceisteanna Parlaiminte (34th Dáil) – Tithe an Oireachtais

Recent Key Developments in the Sector

Budget 2027 Highlights[2]

Older Persons Home Support

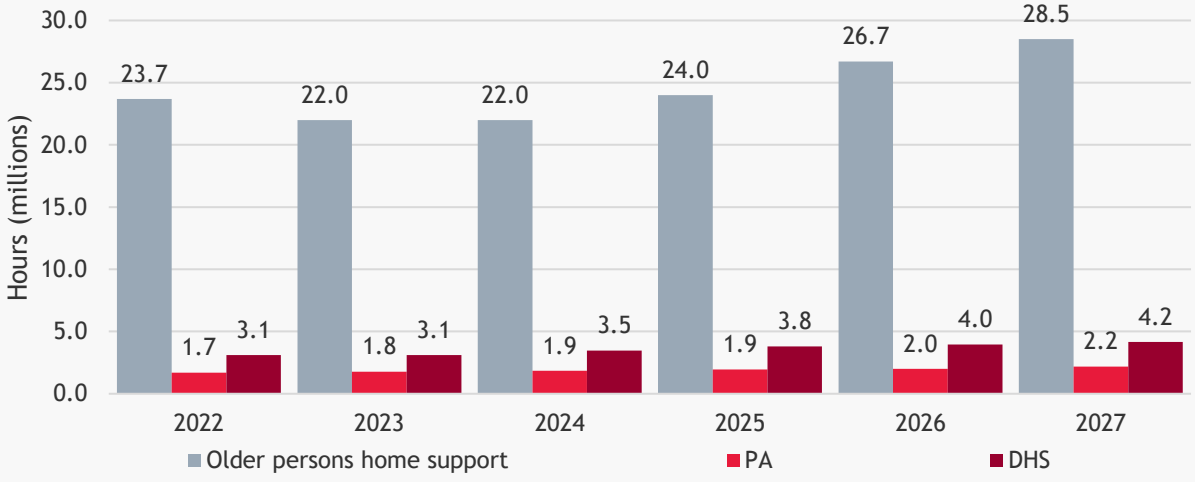
- The 2027 budget announcement includes c. €123m in additional funding for home support services to deliver an additional 1.8m home support hours for older persons. This falls slightly below HCCI's (the sector's largest national representative body) recommendation of 2m additional hours.[3] This brings the total provision to 28.5m hours, representing a 7% increase from 2026 budgeted levels.
- However, despite the continuous increase in funding for home support in recent years, it is noted that as of April 2026 (most recent statistics published by HSE), 5,414 people were awaiting home support services.[4]
- Additionally, HSE figures indicate that the largest waiting list was in Clare and Limerick, while Dublin South West, Dublin North County and Dublin North City & West reported zero waiting lists. This highlights significant regional inequalities in access to home support services.[5]
- To address rising waiting lists and regional inequalities, HCCI has recommended the establishment of an HSE home support waiting list taskforce.[3]

Disability Home Services and Personal Assistance

- The 2027 Budget also includes c.€6.5m funding to deliver an additional 191,000 hours of home support (DHS) and personal assistance (PA) for people with disabilities, representing a 5% increase on the previous year's allocation.[6]
- The HSE has established a PA Review Group to define and standardise PA and to develop a national protocol for the eligibility and allocation of PA hours for disability. However, HCCI has noted that the PA Review Group has not met for a number of months and recommends that this work be completed and that PA be included within the home support regulatory framework.[3]

Whilst the budgetary increases are broadly welcome, given the future demand outlook, as evidenced by the ESRI, indicates that the Government needs to plan for continued investment in the sector to ensure that our older population and people with disabilities can access the services they need in a timely manner.

Budgeted home support hours & disability hours 2022-2027[2,3,7]



Sources and notes:

2. Minister for Older People Kieran O'Donnell announces Budget 2027 funding increases
3. HCCI Pre-Budget Submission 2027
4. Waiting list figures for 2026 data is reported as of April 2026 about.hse.ie/api/v2/download-file/file_based_publications/PQ_35221-26_Sean_O_Fearghail.pdf
5. 26.09 Waiting Lists in 2025 FINAL 2.0
6. Your guide to Budget 2027 and Budget 2027 Expenditure Report
7. Budgeted hours based on national service plan reports from 2022-2026; Note that NSP 2023 target was initially 23.9m but later amended during the year to 22m

Recent Key Developments in the Sector

Round 4 Authorisation Scheme Tender[8,9]

The HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme remains the mechanism for authorising providers to deliver publicly funded services.

The HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme was introduced in 2023 to establish a framework for the authorisation of home support providers and to support improved pay and employment conditions for home care workers.

Since its introduction, the HSE has periodically reopened the scheme through application rounds to authorise additional providers and support the delivery of home support services.

Accordingly, the application process for **Round 4** was reopened in September 2026, and closed on 7 October 2026.

Round 4 Key Highlights:

- Rates and lots by HSE Regional Health Area (RHAs)[10] remain unchanged from Round 3
- Associated service arrangements will commence on 1 January 2027, for an initial 12-month term

The new round is welcome and should support additional authorised providers coming on stream. With inflation now increasingly impacting providers, the authorisation rates will need to be reviewed to ensure operators can continue to fund their cost base and meet their obligations under the scheme, to include but not limited to, payment of the living wage.

Review of InterRAI Assessment[11]

The HSE commenced the rollout of InterRAI assessments in 2024 as a standardised assessment tool to support the evaluation of individuals' care needs.

Its introduction forms part of ongoing efforts to support a more consistent approach to assessing care needs and planning services, including home support and long-term care.

InterRAI provides a structured framework for assessing a person's health, functional abilities and support requirements, helping to inform care planning and service allocation decisions.

Update on the progress of InterRAI implementation:[12]

- The HSE achieved only c. 26% of its target for improving home care assessments last year
- It was also noted that there were significant regional differences in the implementation:
  - **HSE Midwest** delivered 0% of planned assessments
  - **HSE West and North-West** were closest to the target with c.22% fewer assessments than planned.[9]



Sources and Notes:

8. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) (Round 4 Opening – HSE 29617)
9. European Dynamics - View CfT Workspace
10. RHA - the geographic planning areas designed to align hospital and community healthcare services at regional level
11. Home Help Service – Thursday, 21 Mar 2024 - Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas
12. HSE – InterRAI

Summary

The Health (Amendment) Home Support Providers Act 2026 has been enacted but has not yet commenced; commencement is dependent on a Ministerial Commencement Order and finalisation of HIQA national standards and supporting regulations.

It is important to note that, while the home support budget has increased over time and has increased further under Budget 2027, capacity constraints remain evident with over 5,000 people awaiting home support as of April 2026. In this context and recognising that HSE funded home support services are primarily funded through exchequer funding, the Department of Health is examining alternative funding models to support the long term sustainability of home care services.

To meet growing demand for long-term care in Ireland, the system will require further policy reform, additional supporting measures, and targeted investment across the sector. These actions are needed to strengthen overall capacity and to alleviate pressure on home support services. The HCCI has called for measures to improve recruitment and retention, including (but not limited to) mileage funding for carers and compensation for cancelled calls. We support these proposals; while they may appear modest at first glance, they would make a tangible difference to workforce sustainability and help the sector respond to rising demand in a more resilient way.

BDO have assisted many home care operators with their growth plans.

Should you wish to discuss access to capital or routes to achieving growth specific to your circumstances, please contact any member of the BDO Home Care Team.

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