



The Home Care Sector in Ireland

2026 Quarterly Snapshot
July 2026

Update on the Home Support Providers Bill

On 24 June 2026, *Minister of State for Older People and Housing, Kieran O'Donnell*, announced that the *Health (Amendment) (Home Support Providers) Bill 2025* had completed all stages in Seanad Éireann and would now be presented to the President for signature and enactment into law.

Key Provisions of the Bill¹

Registration

- ▶ Registration and inspection scheme for home support providers
- ▶ Two-year transition period for existing providers
- ▶ Three-year registration period, subject to renewal
- ▶ Operating without registration will be an offence.

Inspection

- ▶ Inspection powers for business premises and private dwellings (with service user consent)
- ▶ Chief Inspector empowered to refuse, vary, or cancel registrations where requirements are not met.

Compliance

- ▶ Providers required to comply with regulations and HIQA standards
- ▶ HIQA's draft National Standards for Home Support Services outline key principles including person-centred care, accountability, responsiveness, safety and wellbeing, and a human rights-based approach.



¹Houses of Oireachtas - History of the Home support providers Bill 2025: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2025/84/>

Increased Demand and Staffing Dynamics

The demand for home support has continuously increased over recent years, which has been supported by the Government's increase in funding for the sector. This is evidenced by the increase in budgeted hours shown in the graph below.²

However, the waiting list for home support has consistently been above 5,000 over recent years.

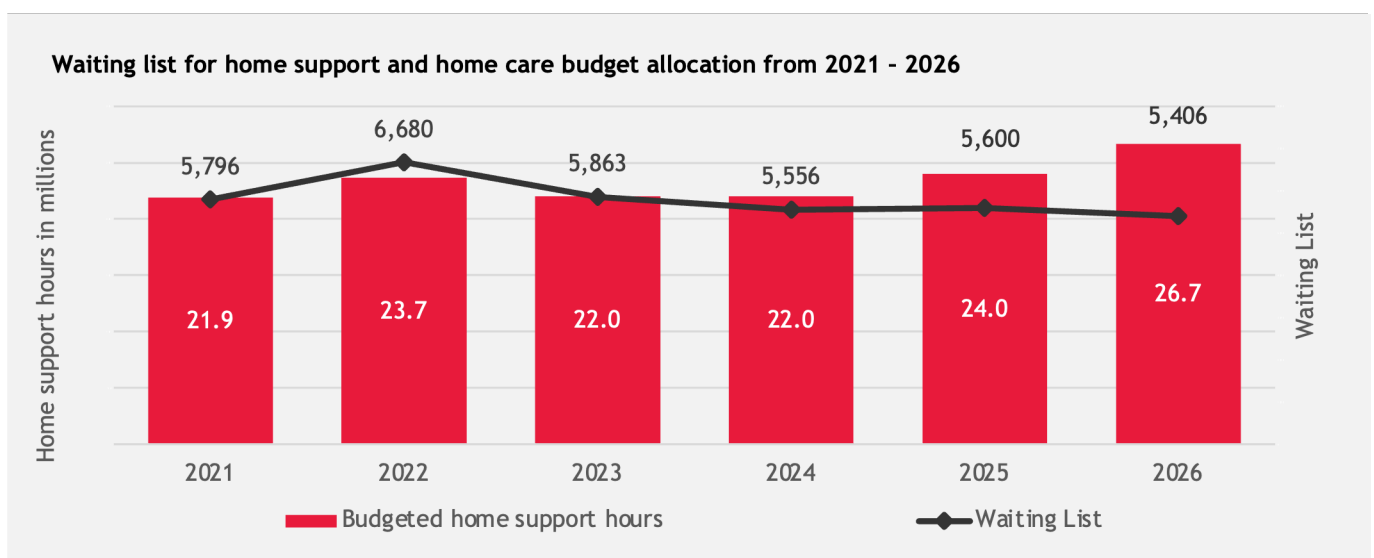
The National Service Plan (NSP) for 2026 introduced a target home care waiting list of 4,500 while reports from February 2026 estimate that 5,406³ people were waiting for a carer which highlights the ongoing challenges in the sector and the need for additional carers to meet the target notwithstanding broader administrative challenges in the allocation of home support services.⁴

The introduction of the HSE Home Support Authorisation Scheme (implemented in 2023) for private and voluntary providers delivering State-funded care has established requirements in relation

to carers' terms and conditions, including a requirement that carers are paid at least the Living Wage, supported by enhanced funding rates. This is intended to support improved pay levels in the sector in response to persistent workforce challenges.

In response to broader staffing challenges, the Government has approved proposals to begin preparations to amend the Employment Permits Act 2024 to provide greater flexibility around the 50:50 rule, with a particular focus on the health and social care sector.⁵ This reflects ongoing workforce pressures in the health and social care sector.

These pressures extend beyond the formal workforce to family carers. The State of Caring report⁶ (June 2026) finds that 71% of family carers are struggling to make ends meet, with nearly two-thirds on waiting lists for publicly funded services. The report recommends measures including increasing the carer's allowance and extending its scope, aimed at alleviating the financial strain arising from rising living costs.



²Budgeted hours based on national service plan reports from 2021-2026; Note that NSP 2021 target was revised within the NSP Q1 2021 Review, therefore the comparative in NSP 2022 has been used herein; NSP 2023 target was initially 23.9m but later amended during the year to 22m

³Waiting list figures for 2021-2025 based on HCCI pre budget submission 2027 and in relation to December of each period; 2026 data is a reported estimate as of February 2026 [Waiting list for home care services surges by 13% in a year](#)

⁴The Case for Changing the Fastest Finger First Model in Home Support

⁵Ministers Burke and Dillon announce new employment permits to support homes, health and transport

⁶<https://www.familycarers.ie/media/1jnkarn2/the-state-of-caring-2026.pdf>

Summary

The long-awaited Home Support Providers Bill has completed all stages of the Oireachtas and will now proceed to the President for signature and enactment into law. Once enacted, the Bill will introduce a statutory registration and inspection framework for home support providers. Demand for home support services continues to grow, while workforce constraints and challenges in service allocation have contributed to waiting lists remaining above 5,000 people.

However, a number of policy measures are under review to help address these pressures, notably proposed changes to the 50:50 EEA and non-EEA workforce rule currently in place. BDO reiterates that, given the demand outlook for home support services, continued investment is required to support older people to age in place for as long as possible before progressing to other care settings within the continuum of care. This is consistent with the objectives of Sláintecare to deliver integrated, person-centred care closer to home and should help improve outcomes for service users while supporting the efficient use of State resources.

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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