

Statutory Homecare Consultation Document
Submission from the Irish Association of Social Workers Special Interest Group in Ageing (SIGA)

Successive government policies have supported the preference of the majority of older people and younger adults with a disability to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. However there is a tension between expressed government policy and state funding of services to achieve this objective.

Home care services play a central role in maintaining the health and independence of older people and younger adults with a disability, maximising their potential to remain living at home.

However social workers have consistently reported regional variations and difficulties accessing adequate home care services on behalf of vulnerable older and younger adults both in the community and within hospital settings awaiting discharge. Additionally social workers have noted a narrowing of the scope of home care services towards personal care alone, thereby not acknowledging the valuable role that home care services provide in terms of health promotion, social and carer support.

Given that our population is rising and ageing, as well as experiencing an increase in chronic health conditions, there will continue to be ever increasing pressure on these under-resourced home care services and their ability to enable older and younger adults with complex care needs receive care at home.

The current system for provision of home care services is unsustainable and SIGA has identified the following priorities for the statutory home care consultation process:

1. Identification of what services fall within the remit of the scheme.
2. Publication of transparent eligibility criteria for the scheme, underpinned by a care needs assessment.
3. Equal access to the scheme irrespective of geographical location, age, or other determinants.
4. Identification of a sustainable funding model to support the scheme.
5. Development of standards and regulation to ensure the quality of service provision.
6. Robust and responsive tendering process supporting the scheme.

SIGA is of the view that any legislation must aim to ensure that there is transparency, consistency and fairness in the development and application of community-based services nationally and the principles behind the legislation must re-focus energy and resources towards community/primary care if government policy is to succeed

Yours sincerely

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Chair of SIGA

Irish Association of Social Workers Special Interest Group in Ageing
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