



FAQs on Home Support Regulations

What are these regulations about?

The regulations outline minimum requirements that companies or organisations providing home support services must meet to hold a license to operate. This includes public, private and not-for-profit home support providers.

What is home support?

Home support covers assistance with a wide range of activities that can help a person live at home if they are ill, frail or disabled. This includes:

- Physical assistance with mobility, dressing, washing, using the bathroom and eating;
- Making sure someone remembers to take their medicine properly;
- Help with day-to-day activities such as cooking, shopping, housework;
- Exercise and social activities inside and outside the home;
- Emotional support and encouragement;
- Personal assistance (that is a package of support to maximise independence, health and social engagement)

Home support can take place inside or outside the home, including the person's local area.

What types of jobs are there in home support?

Home support roles include home helps, personal assistants and community-based healthcare support assistants.

Why are these regulations being introduced?

The Department of Health is developing a new scheme for financing and regulating home support services. This includes a new law requiring home support providers to get a license to operate from HIQA (the Health Information



and Quality Authority). These regulations will go alongside the law and set out the minimum requirements needed to get a license. The aim of this is to make sure home support service users get a consistently high standard of care in their homes.

Who do the regulations apply to?

These regulations apply to companies, agencies or other bodies providing home support services to people aged 18 or over who need them because of illness, frailty or disability. The home support services can be public, private or not-for-profit.

Who do the regulations **not** apply to?

These regulations **do not** apply to:

- Home support services for people aged under 18;
- Support provided by family or friends;
- Unpaid services;
- A direct employment relationship between an individual home support worker and one service-user; and
- Services provided exclusively by registered healthcare professionals (e.g. nurses, physiotherapists).

What are the main areas these regulations cover?

The Regulations cover four main areas.

- **Service delivery:** This covers the basic rules for how home support providers should operate. It includes having written agreements with service-users on what care will be provided and also outlines requirements around record keeping, service provision, needs assessment and safeguarding.
- **Staffing:** This covers the staffing and training requirements which home support providers must put in place. It outlines minimum educational



qualifications for home support workers and the timeframe for getting these. It also outlines how home support workers must be able to communicate effectively with the service-user and have a photo-ID. They must also be Garda-vetted and have international police clearance (if necessary).

- **Corporate governance:** This covers requirements for clear management structures and monitoring of service quality. It requires annual reporting on staff and service-user numbers to HIQA. It also covers financial procedures such as written invoices and receipts, and notice periods for changes in fees.
- **Corporate oversight.** This covers policies and procedures home support providers must have in place, such as for complaints, infection control, health and safety, and quality assurance.

When these regulations come into force, will a person receiving home support services have to do anything differently?

The regulations do not require the service user to do anything differently. However, they should benefit from the fact that all home support providers will have to meet consistent standards and there will be an independent body (HIQA) to make sure they meet the requirements. Service users will also benefit from written service agreements, transparent fee structures and clear complaints procedures.

My father has a carer coming into the house whom we employ privately – do these regulations apply to us?

It depends. Direct arrangements are not covered by these regulations – so if you are that person's direct employer these regulations do not affect you. However, if you purchase private home support hours through a home support agency, then that agency will need to be licensed and comply with the regulations.



I care for my aunt in her home every day, do these regulations apply to me?

No, family care is not covered by these regulations.

Do these regulations apply when a home support worker accompanies their client outside the home, for example to the shops or for a walk?

Yes, the definition of home includes the local surroundings of a service-user's private address.

Will home support workers have to have particular qualifications to provide care under these new rules?

Yes. These regulations will require all home support workers to have minimum educational qualifications or to get these within a set timeframe.

Why should I respond to this consultation?

It is important that the regulations are fit for purpose so before introducing them we would like to get the opinions of service-users and their families, home support workers, home support providers and other individuals and groups interested in this topic.

How can I respond to this consultation?

There is a short survey asking for your opinion on measures in the draft regulations. Individual or group responses can be made using the on-line consultation form [here](#). The survey can also be printed off as a hard copy here [here](#) and emailed to HSRConsultation@health.gov.ie or posted to Home Support Reform, Department of Health, Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50 - 58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, D02 XW14.

The Disability Participation and Consultation Network is holding online information sessions to help those with disabilities to respond. They can be contacted by email at disabilityparticipation@gmail.com.



The deadline for responses is 5pm, July 28th 2022.

What will happen to my response?

The Institute of Public Health will prepare a report on the findings of the public consultation for the Department of Health.-It will include quotes and a list of organisations which made responses. No individuals will be identified in the report. Based on consultation responses the Department will consider further amendments to the regulations before they are signed into law (expected Q1 2023).

Personal information is not being looked for in this consultation. If you do submit any personal details they will be deleted. Submissions and survey responses may be released under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 but this will not include the name of individuals making submissions.

This FAQ Document was written by the Department of Health with the assistance of the Institute of Public Health (IPH).



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