Home Care of Older People in Ireland: Main Issues and Challenges

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Outline of Presentation

- Short history of long-term care for older people in Ireland
- The three provider sectors in formal home care
- Current policy context
- Policy challenges
- Regulating and monitoring ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’
- Conclusions
Historical evolution of long-term care in Ireland
Stage 1: Informal /Charity
Evolution of care services II

Historical evolution of long-term care in Ireland
Stage 2: Informal & Institutional

Formal

- State
- Private
- Non profit

Informal

Family

Care Recipient
Evolution of care services III

Historical evolution of long-term care in Ireland
Stage 3: State financial support for (in)formal domiciliary

Formal

- State
- Private
- Non profit

Informal

- Family

Care Recipient

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=FUNDING
Evolution of care services IV

Historical evolution of long-term care in Ireland
Stage 4: Complex Care Mix

Formal

State → Private → Non Profit → Care Recipient → Family

Informal

Family → Grey Market

= FUNDING
The Three Provider Sectors

**Public Sector**

Planning and financing
LHO Managers of Services for Older People, Directors of Public Health Nursing

Operational management
LHO personnel above, Home Help Organizers, Private Agency/Company Directors

Care Workers
Health Care Assistants, Home Helps, Care Workers

**Non-profit Sector**

**Private Sector**
The Three Sectors, Primary Focus and Care Worker Titles

- **SECTOR**
  - Public
  - Private
  - Non-profit

- **Primary FOCUS**
  - Personal Care
  - Personal Care & Domestic Work
  - Domestic Work

- **CARE WORKER**
  - Health Care Assistant
  - Private Agency Care Worker
  - Home Help
There are three “worlds” of formal domiciliary care in operation in Ireland.

Public policies, absence of regulation, have served to foster the divergence of these worlds.

Expansion of cash-for-care (home care packages) likely to lead to growth in the absolute and relative size of private sector.

Diverse policies and procedures at Company/organisation/LHO level.
Policy challenges

- Matching policy statements on importance of home care
- Clarification with regard to assessment/qualifying criteria
- Clarification with regard to financing
- Greater and more equal access/availability of packages
- Co-ordinating support for informal care and formal home care
- Matching progress in development of standards, inspection, financing of institutional care
- Regulation needed to help ensure standards and quality of care for care recipients, to create level playing field, to safeguard care workforce
Improving Quality of Care

Focus on Inputs

Focus on Outputs

For Example:
- Conducting background checks on carers
- Qualifications and Training of carers
- Ratio between supervisors and carers

Proactive

For Example:
- Standardised complaints procedures
- Standardised monitoring and supervisory system

Reactive
Conclusions

- ‘Critical juncture’ for home care in Ireland

- Progress has been made, but in the absence of a framework governing key areas of access, financing, quality

- Regulating home care is necessary and possible

- Does not need to be expensive, intrusive, disruptive of already well-functioning arrangements
Not to lose sight of the positive…

‘It’s like they are another Granny, when they get sick it’s like it’s one of your family is sick’.

‘I absolutely love every aspect of my job…I love working with the elderly’.

‘I enjoy making people happy…the peace I have when I go to help them, I know when I am going in I’m doing some good for this person…I know when I’m leaving they are happy…I know they are getting the fullest care they could possibly get…I love getting up to go to work because [I’m] helping someone [I’m] making them happy’.