

The path to sustainable home care

EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage
Promoting health and well-being

WHO collaboration

Technical guidance
Country mission

Over the past decade, Ireland has experienced a rise in the demand for home support services, driven by an ageing population and a policy commitment to support older people to live independently at home and in age-friendly environments. Recognizing the escalating need, Ireland sought to refine and sustainably finance its home support sector, which has grown by 25% since 2021.

For support in this area, Ireland approached the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, a partnership hosted by the Regional Office that identifies and generates evidence to inform public health decisions. This collaboration provided Ireland with vital research and opportunities to network with experts to improve financing for home care, which will allow people to age comfortably and while continuing to engage with their communities.

The impact

Ireland benefited from comprehensive research and a policy dialogue to support its evaluation of home care financing. The collaboration highlighted that a co-payment model might not be a sustainable solution due to administrative costs and potential financial burdens on older people. Instead, the dialogue suggested leveraging Ireland's broad tax base and considering social insurance models as viable alternatives.

Lessons learned

- Leveraging global best practices and research is invaluable for shaping effective national health policies.
- Engaging stakeholders through structured policy dialogues fosters informed decision-making and consensus building.
- Addressing both financial and administrative aspects is crucial for sustainable policy development.

Donors and partners

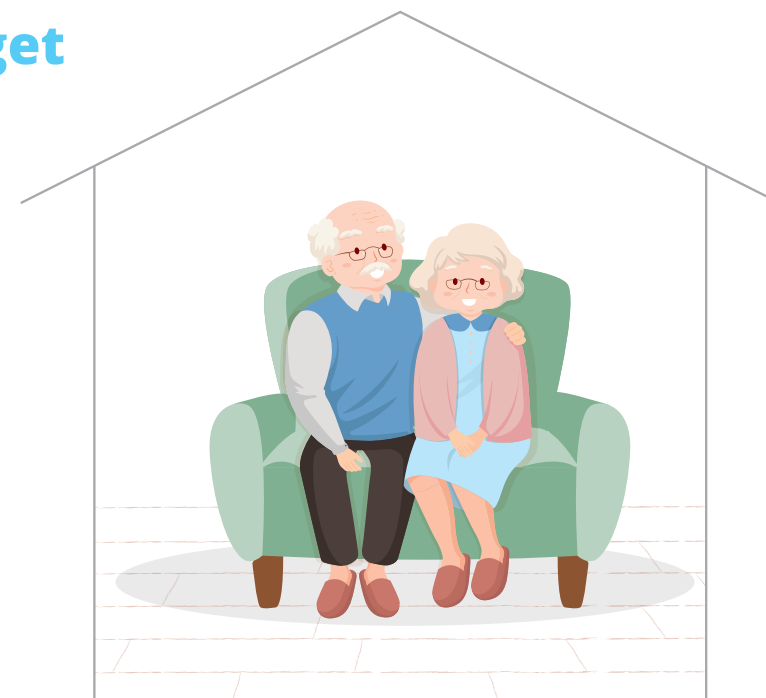
Department of Health; Health Service Executive; European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies



European Region

Ireland's home support budget

2024
€726
million
↑
2020
€495
million



“The policy dialogue facilitated by the European Observatory was eye opening. It shifted our perspectives on how we think about co-payments.”

Tommy Sheridan, Civil Servant at the Department of Health, Ireland

What's next?

Building on this work, Ireland is deepening its collaboration with the Regional Office with a focus on refining sustainable funding models for home support. Future efforts will include a comprehensive capacity review to project long-term demand and resource needs. Public consultations will ensure that the voices of service users and stakeholders are incorporated into policy decisions.