

Improved Standards in Home Care Services Welcomed



June 25, 2012

Bluebird Care has welcomed the improved standards and regulations for home care services in Ireland announced by the HSE and effective from July 1st.

Bluebird Care, appointed yesterday as an approved HSE home care service provider, will work with existing and new HSE clients requiring home care services under the Home Care Package Scheme.

This service will be available for all new applicants approved for a home care package while arrangements for HSE clients currently receiving home care services will not be affected.

The HSE recently concluded a comprehensive procurement process for the provision of new Home Care Packages with Bluebird Care meeting new uniform level of national standards.

Operations Director with Bluebird Care Eddie O'Toole says, *"we are enthused by the appointment as an approved home care provider by the HSE, but even more welcoming of national uniform standards which will raise the standard of home care in Ireland. In an unregulated marketplace it is vital that high standards are set by the HSE with providers critically assessed to meet and indeed exceed standards. This latest step has to be welcomed and in fact we look forward to working with HSE clients nationwide to further improve standards."*

Bluebird Care has recently partnered with Irish Times Training in conjunction with Frontline Training to deliver internationally recognised qualifications through the FETAC accreditation system.

Eddie O'Toole says, "we welcome the stringent monitoring standards now in situ for home care packages within the HSE regions. Our own robust staff training and accreditation programmes have been in place prior to this announcement and we have just partnered with Irish Times Training to deliver ongoing professional development training to our care staff across Ireland."

ENDS.

Notes to editors:

About Bluebird Care:

A national organisation, with 18 offices nationwide Bluebird Care serves Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Tipperary, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Wicklow, Donegal, Leitrim, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath, Clare, Kildare, Laois and Offaly.

Specialising in care of older persons; care of adults and children with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and sensory impairments; child care; dementia care; palliative care, acquired brain injury; spinal injuries; pre & post operative care; live-in care; personal care; respite care; and specialist personal assistants to support rehabilitation and re-enablement, Bluebird Care offer a wide range of choices to families who really want to have their loved one cared for at home.

More information on www.bluebirdcare.ie

About The Home Care Package Scheme:

The Service Level Agreements with the approved providers will initially be for a period of one year. Services will be monitored by the HSE through the Service Level Agreement in place with every provider. The HSE will tender for home care services again next year so that all parties will have the opportunity to tender again. In this way it is anticipated that service quality will be improved incrementally.

It is important to note that all current service providers are also expected to reach minimum standards of care and these are monitored at local level through service audits

and reviews of individual care plans. The tender process has introduced higher standards to improve the quality of care on a consistent and nationwide basis.

The procurement process builds on the National Guidelines for the Standardised Implementation of the Home Care Packages Scheme, the implementation of which is ongoing.

The Home Care Packages Scheme has been operated by the HSE since 2006.

A Home Care Package is a set of services provided or arranged by the HSE to help an older person to be cared for in their own home. Services provided through a home care package are flexible, but might include additional home help hours, nursing care, physiotherapy, respite care etc to support the clients' needs. Services may be provided directly by the HSE by its own staff, for example, home help workers and nurses, by voluntary providers operating on behalf of the HSE or by private care providers.

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