

Home Help

What is home help?

Personal and home care aides assist the elderly, disabled, ill, and mentally disabled persons who live in their own homes or in residential care facilities instead of in health facilities.

Generally, home help is chosen when a family member needs constant care and the family cannot solely provide that care. Some families are comfortable with one professional caregiver. Others may need a team that can provide a range of services.

Market

A growing need for professional caregivers has coincided with important changes in Irish society such as changing family patterns, gains in female employment, an ageing population and increases in income. As a result, job opportunities are expected to be good evidenced by the rapid growth in home health care and high replacement needs. A major expansion in the country's palliative care services is to be funded by the government, including home care aides. This has seen a number of initiatives such as home help franchises, which may open up new employment opportunities in this area.

Requirements

The work can be varied, challenging and rewarding. Most home care aides work with elderly or physically or mentally disabled clients who need more extensive personal and home care than family or friends can provide. Some can work with families in which an individual is incapacitated. Aides provide housekeeping and routine personal care services.

Some of the services may include: cleaning clients' houses, washing, changing bed linens. Aides may plan meals (including special diets), shop for food, and cook. Aides also may help clients get out of bed, bathe, dress, and groom. Some accompany clients to doctors' appointments or on other errands. Aides may also provide instruction and psychological support. Daily routines may vary widely.

Most home care aides work part time; sometimes working with a number of different clients, each job lasting a few hours, days, or weeks. Surroundings differ from case to case. Some clients are pleasant and cooperative; others are angry, abusive, depressed, or otherwise difficult. The main requirement in becoming a home care aide is compassion.



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This is one of a series of fact sheets on potential income generating activities.

All fact sheets are available in the Advisory Section of the Teagasc Website www.teagasc.ie

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Teagasc Fact Sheets present a brief overview of a topic. Further detailed advice should always be sought from relevant sources.

Training

Formal training is generally not required to work as a home care aide.

However, looking after people living in the community is a very demanding role and home helpers should need to be facilitated to carry out their work to a high standard.

In order to become a professional home helper aides should have a keen desire to help people and be hard working. It is also important to be responsible and compassionate. In addition, aides should be tactful, honest, and discreet because they work in private homes.

There are training courses available. Fás offers traineeships in Care courses. Structured training is provided during work placement. The traineeship allows access to potential employment opportunities. In addition Fás may provide up to 70% grant aid of the cost of the course for people in employment under a Competency Development Programme.

Contact your local Fás office for more details. www.fas.ie

It is possible to register your name with your local health board. If a vacancy arises they will contact you.

Salary is varied and depends naturally on the time and type of work involved in helping the client.

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