To ask the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications the way that his Department will support persons with long-term incontinence with respect to the disposal of medical incontinence wear; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Holly Cairns.

\* For WRITTEN answer on Tuesday, 20th September, 2022.

*REPLY*

My Department has engaged with relevant stakeholders, including representative organisations such as Family Carer’s Ireland, Age Action, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, the Irish Wheelchair Association, Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland and public bodies such as the National Disability Authority, the HSE, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Protection, in an effort to see how best to support persons with long-term incontinence with respect to the disposal of medical incontinence wear.

Since mid-2017, a range of charging options have operated, which encourage householders to reduce and separate their waste. This provides flexibility to waste collectors to develop various service-price offerings that suit different household circumstances. Mandatory per kilogramme 'pay by weight' charging was not introduced. A Price Monitoring Group (PMG) was established in mid-2017, and continued to operate until December 2020, to monitor the on-going cost of residential waste collection to homeowners across Ireland as the ‘flat-rate structure’ was being phased out. While fluctuations in prices and service offerings were observed during the period in which the PMG operated, the overall trend was relative price stability. Results from the PMG are available on my Department's website.

In September 2020, I launched a new national waste policy for the period 2020-2025, A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy. This plan contains a range of measures to empower households through enhanced consumer protection requirements including an enhanced monitoring of the market to ensure continued relative price stability.