



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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25th May 2020

Deputy Carol Nolan
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: carol.nolan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Nolan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ 4546/20

To ask the Minister for Health if the funding allocation to an organisation (details supplied) will be restored by at least 16%; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied; NCBI - which reflects funding reduction since 2008, enabling it to respond to current and future growth in number of persons experiencing sight loss in line with the increasing population of older persons.

PQ 4562/20

To ask the Minister for Health if one single national budget will be considered for an organisation (details supplied) to facilitate equal access to services nationwide; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied; For NCBI

PQ 4592/20

To ask the Minister for Health if his Department will ring-fence adequate funding to facilitate a project (details supplied) and its associated costs in continuing to better support the evolving access needs of students with print disability in further and higher education; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied; The NCBI Access Library infrastructure development.

PQ 4593/20

To ask the Minister for Health if his Department will seek to officially recognize and support an organisation (details supplied) as a complementary service provider to support and strengthen the structures to become more individualised, equipped and responsive to the needs of children with impaired vision; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied; The NCBI

HSE Response

HSE Disability Services has been allocated c. €2 billion in 2020. This funding is providing Disability Services throughout the country to children and adults with physical, sensory, intellectual disability and autism.

The 2020 HSE Service Plan sets out, at a high level, the anticipated service activity levels that are to be delivered during 2020 commensurate with this substantial state investment.

The majority of disability service provision in Ireland has historically and continues to be provided by voluntary agencies, which are funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act 2004. The HSE works in partnership with these agencies to ensure the best level of service possible is provided to people with a disability and their families, within the resources available.

There is continuous engagement between the HSE, the Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) and these agencies to ensure resources are prioritised on the basis of meeting the needs of people with a disability and those caring for them.

National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)

NCBI is a not for profit charitable organisation which provides support and services nationwide to people experiencing sight loss. The overall aim of NCBI services is to enable people to live an independent life of their choice.

HSE Disability Services has a high regard for NCBI and funds the agency, under Section 39 of the Health Act to provide a range of centre, domiciliary and community based services to people who are blind or vision impaired. This funding is governed by a number of Service Arrangements in all 9 CHO Areas, which identify service delivery provided by the agency in return for the money being provided to them. The Service Arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis. NCBI received funding of €6.55 million in 2018 and 2019 from HSE Disability Services and is scheduled to receive funding of €6,626,945 in 2020.

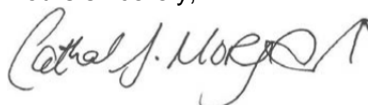
Financial Challenges during COVID-19

The HSE Executive Management Team agreed a structured approach to addressing the financial challenges of S39 Agencies due to COVID-19. The objective of the programme is to provide a structured governance process and modus operandi through which S39 partners experiencing financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) can engage through the HSE to ensure, where appropriate, continuity of essential services provided by these agencies.

The HSE has developed a methodology to provide a pro forma approach to support decision making in respect of S39 Organisations that have made submissions to the HSE for both financial & non-financial supports during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HSE is currently engaged in this process with NCBI, who have provided very substantial and useful background and financial information on the Impact of the COVID-19 virus to NCBI.

The Planning and Business Analysis team have been working on this process with regard to NCBI and are examining the documentation and information provided to date. This is at an advanced stage and we expect to be in direct contact with NCBI shortly.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations