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17th August 2021

Deputy David Cullinane,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 18286/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the current funding available for the technical aids scheme by CHO in tabular form; the funding drawn down between 2016 to 2020; the eligibility criteria to access the funding; if the HSE will publish information on the application process on its website; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- David Cullinane

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 18286/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The Community Funded Schemes is a collective name for all of the many products, supports, supplies, appliances and aids that are provided through community services. There are a variety of products and services provided under the schemes.

The funding drawn down on aids and appliances between 2016 and 2020 is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

	Full Year Expenditure					Full Year Budget
CHO	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
1	4,148,937	6,928,690	7,608,569	7,205,498	7,554,733	5,375,573
2	5,690,110	4,875,114	4,620,879	5,333,929	6,335,731	5,133,255
3	4,617,698	4,604,635	5,740,346	3,680,928	4,142,859	4,108,622
4	9,390,908	9,655,166	9,535,710	9,167,835	8,354,573	5,723,876
5	15,547,658	16,676,278	16,797,466	17,191,959	17,259,719	13,816,698
6	8,207,000	9,047,000	9,283,000	10,102,000	8,743,000	8,565,000
7	19,144,715	22,103,904	19,517,585	23,178,732	19,533,437	19,217,185
8	5,609,000	6,191,000	6,221,000	5,307,000	6,009,000	4,363,000
9	16,264,939	18,916,602	17,761,919	18,867,909	18,220,638	17,390,304

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The criteria for accessing aids and appliances are many and varied and relate to the particular service, aid or appliance that is being requested. Criteria can be based on; clinical need, demand, General Medical Service's eligibility, compassionate grounds, LTI eligibility, priority listing, budget availability, historical local practices, or a combination of these criteria. The eligibility criteria while common in many instances, are specific to the particular service, aid, or appliance that is being requested.

In general, the eligibility for aids and appliances conforms with those for other health services and were set out in the Health Act 1970. This act provides for two categories of eligibility for all persons ordinarily resident in the state, i.e. full eligibility (medical card) and limited eligibility (all others). Entitlement to a medical card is determined mainly by reference to means, with provision for discretion to grant a card in cases of 'undue hardship' where the income guidelines are exceeded. All other persons who are 'ordinarily resident' in the state have limited eligibility.

Aids and appliances encompasses thousands of diverse products, the application processes are varied and multiple. Many products are prescribed for the recipient by a health care professional, and it is this professional rather than the individual who completes the application. Other products are applied for directly by the recipient. Furthermore, the budget and management of aids and appliances is devolved to the local Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO's) and as such they have their own processes in place for the management of these products. Given the above, there are a very considerable number of different application forms and processes depending on the particular product and CHO. Therefore, it is not practicable to publish them on the national website.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Maeve Raeside
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations