



26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Deputy Peadar Tóibín,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 44694/20 - To ask the Minister for Health his plans to deal with tariffs on prosthetics in a hard Brexit situation; his plans to address the increased cost of same; if costs will be met by the State; his plans to develop new supply chains within the EU; and his plans to bring the discretionary medical card for prosthetics in line with articles in the Lisbon Treaty and the UNCPRD.**

**-Peadar Tóibín**

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

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

With regard to tariffs on prosthetics, we now know that the Hard Brexit scenario is now the case. There are no tariffs on goods coming into or out of the EU to the UK and vice versa.

Prosthetic services are currently provided by a range of private providers and the cost of prostheses for eligible service users is charged to the HSE. Clinical governance arrangements vary depending on the location where services are accessed. Each Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) governs its own area in terms of budget and funding arrangements. In terms of eligibility criteria, each application for a prosthesis within a CHO is assessed (for medical card and LTI card patients) by the local Resource Allocation Group (RAG) and a determination made regarding approval based on priority and funding availability within local budgets.

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. These products and services play a key role in assisting and supporting service users to maintain every day functioning, to remain living in their homes and local community. They also avoid the need for a hospital presentation or admission whilst also facilitating early discharge from hospital back into the community.

As part of the HSE's Service Improvement Programme for Community Funded Schemes, a work stream has been dedicated to standardising provision of aids and appliances at national level. This work includes the establishment of a national approved list of items, national guidance for prioritisation, and standardised provision across the entire country, to help ensure that both the quality and equity of access to the service is improved.

In general, Medical cards are awarded following an assessment of means i.e. the individuals incomings and outgoings are assessed and a medical card is awarded where the income requirements are met.

If an applicant doesn't meet the income requirements, but has a medical condition(s) that makes paying for healthcare difficult e.g. additional medical expenses including the costs of providing for aids and appliances, the HSE National Medical Card Unit may assess the individual situation and in circumstances where medical bills cause undue financial hardship a Medical Officer will recommend a Medical Card i.e. a discretionary medical card.

The National Medical Card Unit has no role in the funding of prostheses although the cost of prostheses will be considered as a medical expense in an application.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TJ Dunford', written over a light grey rectangular background.

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TJ Dunford,  
Interim Head of Operations Primary Care/A.N.D.  
Community Operations