



27<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 48715/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the guidance the HSE provides to community healthcare organisations on the provision of information and criteria to the general public on the technical aids grant scheme for visually impaired persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**- Neasa Hourigan**

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 48715/21) 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, all of which are managed locally in the Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO).

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 to 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 and services. More detailed information regarding the application process for any particular service or product is best obtained from the local CHO or health centre who are providing the same.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt'.

**Seán McArt**

General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations