



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

23rd September 2021

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: maryloumcdonald@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy McDonald,

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 40540/21

To ask the Minister for Health if the Strengthening Disability Services Fund of €20 million announced in 2020 has been distributed in full; if not, the amount currently available in the fund; and the number of organisations that have received monies from the fund.

PQ 40541/21

To ask the Minister for Health if the Strengthening Disability Services Fund of €20 million announced in 2020 has been distributed in full; if not the amount currently available in the fund; and the number of organisations that have received monies from the fund.

HSE Response.

The Strengthening Disability Services Scheme was established following the announcement by Minister Donnelly and Minister Rabbitte of the allocation of €20m to fund a range of initiatives to enhance the quality of services for people with disabilities and to resource reform initiatives that service providers would implement to enhance the way in which they work.

A Grants Committee was established to review all applications. Many of the applications required significant additional follow up to ensure that the Grants Committee had the information necessary to ensure that the application could be considered fully.

The surge in Covid in the first quarter of 2021 impacted the Scheme in a significant manner as a number of members of the Grant Committee had to prioritise Covid-related work.

The cyber-attack had a major impact also, for two reasons:

1. The email account being used for the Scheme was significantly impacted with the loss of access to all correspondence up to 14th May 2021. As a result, significant time had to be allocated to asking applicants to resubmit information.
2. Since the cyber-attack the OoCIO office has had to prioritise restoring IT services across the HSE. As a result, other work has had to be deferred. ICT projects are required to be considered by the OoCIO at the Community Digital Oversight Group (CDOG), and subsequently by DPOR at the Digital Oversight Group (DGOU) to be compliant with Circular 1421. To date, we have not been able to progress these applications. However, the OoCIO office has now confirmed that they will shortly be in a position to review the applications at the CDOG and will then forward their recommendations to the DGOU for approval.

As of September 2021 the following is the position:

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| • Total Value of Funding approved and in the process of being allocated: | €8,101,497 |
| • Total Value of IT Projects awaiting approval: | €3,748,438 |
| • Other projects awaiting approval (subject to continuing engagement with the organisations involved) | €3,129,078 |

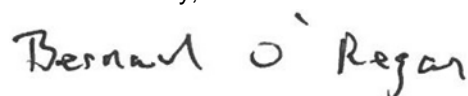
<u>Sub Total</u>	€14,979,013
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Planned dispersal of remaining balance of:	€5,020,987:
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| • Fund for sensory Gardens projects: | €1,000,000 |
| • Fund for use by CHOs for local projects: | €900,000 |
| • Organisations that have not applied: | €1,200,000 |
| • Proposals for Assistive and digital Technology: | €500,000 |
| • Grants to micro-disability organisations (under €1m funding) | €70,000 |
| • 0.1% Pro rata to organisations: | €1,350,987 |

The dispersal of the balance of funds is in progress and is expected to be completed by the end of October.

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan

Assistant National Director-Disability Planning and Integrated Operations