



8th February, 2024

Deputy Harkin,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 51016/23 - To ask the Minister for Health if funding is available for technical aids for the blind and visually impaired for personal use, in each CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Marian Harkin

Dear Deputy Harkin,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 51016/23) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Assistive Technology support is broadly provided through three sectors:

- Health: necessary aids and appliances are supplied via the HSE Community Funded Schemes to support an individual's health needs
- Education: necessary supports are provided through the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Assistive Technology Grant to support educational needs.
- Employment/Social Protection: necessary supports are provided to employers via the Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant.

In relation to Health, the budget and management of aids and appliances via Community Funded Schemes is devolved to the local Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs). There are a variety of aids and appliances provided through community funded schemes including aids for those who are visually impaired. These products play a key role in assisting and supporting service users to maintain every day functioning. Supply of aids and appliances usually involves a qualified health care professional assessing an individual's health needs and making a clinical recommendation on the supports required to enhance their daily living.

The Aids and Appliances Service Improvement Group have published a national list of aids and appliances and prescribing criteria on the HSE website. This sets out clear prescribing criteria to assist prescribers in evidence based decision making. This is available from the following webpage:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/community-funded-schemes/aids-and-appliances/>

The Department of Education administer an Assistive Technology Grant via the National Council for Special Education. This is administered through its network of Special Education Needs Officers (SENOs), who are



responsible for processing applications. Further information on the grant is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/237c68-assistive-technology-grant/#>.

The Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant is designed for people with a disability who have been offered employment, re-deployment, promotion or become self-employed who require a more accessible or adapted workplace to do their job. In this instance an employer may get a grant towards the costs. Further information on the grant is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/38fdd0-workplace-equipment-adaptation-grant/>

I trust this is of assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt', positioned above a horizontal line.

Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations