



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta, An Chéad
Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15, Áras Phlásóg na Rós,
Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile, Páirc
Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta, Caladh an
Treoigh, Luimneach

Office of the Assistant National
Director, National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business
Complex, National Technology Park,
Castletroy, Limerick.

30th May 2025

Deputy Emer Currie,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: emer.currie@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 19383/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if the €1 million fund announced in 2021 for the development of sensory gardens is still available; if schools or other organisations can still apply; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Currie,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

On the 5th of October 2021, then Minister of State for Disability, Anne Rabbitte TD, announced an allocation of €1 million to fund the development of sensory gardens to benefit children and adults with disabilities. A call for submissions was issued, allowing voluntary organisations funded under Section 38 and 39 of the Health Act to apply for funding for the development of these gardens. Applications for funding had to be associated with existing facilities used to provide disability services such as residential, respite or day services.

Sensory gardens include features, surfaces, objects and plants that stimulate our senses through touch, sight, scent, taste and hearing.

The closing date for proposals was determined by the requirement to ensure that funding was released to approved projects in the 2021 financial year. A total of 65 projects to develop sensory gardens were supported throughout the country.

During 2024 the HSE was informed that funding had again become available for the development of sensory initiatives in each of the former Community Health Care Areas (CHOs). At the beginning of May 2025, Regional Healthcare Authorities (RHAs) were notified that this funding was available based on the former CHO structures and will now work to progress their sensory initiatives. to enhance services including Respite, Residential, Day Services and children's services.

The HSE is currently working to operationalise funding for the 2025 sensory grant for HSE and HSE funded organisations providing disability services.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Aoife O'Donohue,
Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúntóir, Seirbhísí Mhíchumas, Rochtain agus Imeascadh,
Assistant National Director, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination,
Access & Integration