



**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,

20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [sean.ofearghail@oireachtas.ie](mailto:sean.ofearghail@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Ó Fearghaíl,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 4675/25**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the plans that are in place to resolve the ongoing difficulties being experienced by a social enterprise (details supplied) in the construction of its national child development centre in Kildare town where construction works have ceased; the reason the organisation is experiencing inordinate difficulties in securing meetings with relevant officials in the HSE to address among other matters the current funding model; when a service level agreement will be put in place to guarantee a reduction in the number of children awaiting therapies; and if she will make a statement on the matter.*

Details supplied: Sensational Kids.

**HSE Response**

Sensational Kids is a not-for-profit organisation delivering interventions to children over the last 10 years. It operates as a child development centre, providing subsidised therapy services for children and professional development training workshops for those working with children with special needs.

Sensational Kids employs approximately 30 staff, including a clinical team across child development centres in Kildare, Mayo, Monaghan and West Cork, providing supports such as occupational therapy, speech & language therapy and play therapy.

In 2023, the Assistant National Director Disability Services met with the CEO of Sensational Kids and discussed what would be involved if Sensational Kids were to become a Section 39 agency.



In September 2023, the HSE confirmed to Sensational Kids at a meeting with the Minister of its commitment to working with Sensational Kids in supporting children with disabilities to access supports.

Following receipt of an updated proposal from Sensational Kids in September 2023, staff from HSE Disability services and from HSE Estates met with Sensational Kids in October 2023 concerning their proposal regarding a waitlist initiative for intervention and their building proposal for a National Child Development Centre.

HSE Estates provided Sensational kids with the *Capital Projects Manual & Approvals Protocol HBS Estates* with a focus on Section 3 requirements and advised the organisation of the requirement for public tendering on a publicly funded capital project.

The HSE confirmed that a clear funding plan setting out the HSE capital requirement was required in order that the HSE could consider the building proposal for discussion and inclusion on the 2024 Capital Plan proposals. As the clarification was not available at that time, it was not possible to include same in the 2024 Capital Plan.

The Service Improvement Lead, National Children's Disability Services set up another meeting in March 2024 which included personnel from Sensational Kids, HSE National Estates and the Head of Disability Services CHO 7.

The critical requirements for Sensational Kids to complete for a Capital Submission to the HSE were reviewed again.

HSE National Estates raised concerns with Sensational Kids regarding their proposal and recirculated the Capital Manual to Sensational Kids. It was clarified again with Sensational Kids, the steps and documentation that are required for completion of a capital submission.

The concerns are as follows;

-Phase 1: Build - National Estates raised significant concern with Sensational Kids regarding the risk of their plan to sign a contract for €9.6m + €1.9m fees with only €3.6m in hand so far.

-Phase 2: €5m fit out cost is now being sought by Sensational Kids, €4m over the initial €1m due to rising costs since original submission.

To progress matters, following that meeting, it was agreed that the CEO of Sensational Kids would liaise with the Head of Disability Services in CHO 7 with a view towards progressing a Service Arrangement and providing assistance and support for developing a capital submission.

There has been significant engagement with Sensational Kids and HSE disability staff in order to agree the service required by the HSE in line with the CDNT model and the ability of the organisation to provide service with their existing staffing complement.

### **Current position**

With regard to the National Child Development Centre, a meeting was held with Sensational Kids and with Capital and Estates from Dublin Midlands on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025. This was to discuss the Capital application process. At this meeting, Sensational Kids were again advised in detail about the capital application process and templates were shared with the organization. The HSE is currently awaiting the submission of a completed application from the organization in order to consider further.

A meeting is planned with Sensational Kids in due course to discuss their local service provision for the Kildare area.

### **Funding**

The organisation has received small grants under the National Lottery Grant Scheme amounting to €4,577 in 2016 and €3,000 in December 2022.

In 2024, Sensational Kids received €241,000 in funding under S39 of the Health Act 2004 via a Service Arrangement with CHO 7 /DSKWW



*(Please note :-The funding Information given above is from the SPG system is as at the date indicated, and represents the funding arrangement allocations entered by the operational system. SPG is not a finance or payment system and figures will fluctuate on a continuum as updates on governance arrangement are uploaded).*

Yours Sincerely,

**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Assistant National Director,**  
**Access and Integration,**  
**Disability Services**

