



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,
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Roselawn House, University Business
Complex, National Technology Park,
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23rd September 2025

Deputy Brian Brennan,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: brian.brennan@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 47845/25

To ask the Minister for Health the funding currently provided to an organisation (details supplied); if increased funding is being considered; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Details Supplied: Funding to Vision Ireland for in the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital and other public hospitals.

Dear Deputy Brennan,

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

Vision Ireland (previously known as the National Council for the Blind of Ireland NCBI) is a not for profit charitable organisation which provides support and services nationwide to people experiencing sight loss. Vision Ireland's mission is to enable people who are blind and vision impaired to overcome the barriers that impede their independence and participation in society.

It is estimated that there are approximately 55,000 people living with severe visual impairment and blindness across Ireland. Almost 95% of these people have some degree of useful vision while 5% or approximately 2,750 of those are blind.

The organisation offers community based services to help people to adapt to sight loss and maintain their independence. These services include emotional support to the individual experiencing loss of vision and to their families, advice and information on all aspects of vision loss as well as practical support and solutions to the challenges encountered by people with vision loss. Services are offered to people of all ages, from birth through to older age.

Vision Ireland operates a Library and Media Centre that provides Braille production of books for visually impaired service users. Talking books and newspapers are also distributed to the national service users' base and the library currently comprises 16,000 titles in a number of different formats.

Vision Ireland also provide a range of services to public and private organisations to make sure that their services are accessible to people who are blind and vision impaired.

In addition, Vision Ireland advises government departments, companies and individuals on how to make the built environment and services accessible to people with sight loss.

Vision Ireland has two Resource Centres that provide day opportunities to support people with sight loss. The Iona Resource Centre is located in Drumcondra, Dublin and the Lochrann Resource Centre is in the centre of Wexford Town. Both Centres deliver a specialised service for people with a visual impairment, providing each service user with a personalised individual plan that is tailored to meet their specific needs.

The Resource Centres run skills programmes and offer a range of activities including sessions on; technology, health & wellbeing, social discourse, community integration and many more sessions according to the needs and goals of individual service users.



Eye Clinic Liaison Officer Service

Vision Ireland provide an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer Service (ECLO) Service across six of Ireland's largest acute eye clinic – Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Royal Victoria Eye and Ear, CHI at Temple Street, CHI at Crumlin, Cork University Hospital, and University Hospital Waterford.

Funding

The Department of Children, Disability and Equality via HSE Disability Services fund Vision Ireland, under Section 39 of the Health Act to provide a range of centre, domiciliary and community based services to people who are blind or vision impaired. This funding is governed by a number of Service Arrangements in all 6 Regional Healthcare Areas, which identify service delivery provided by the agency in return for the money being provided to them. The Service Arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis.

Vision Ireland received funding of €8,351,518* in 2024 from the HSE. €680,000 of this relates to ECLO services across the six acute eye clinics.

*Please note:-The funding Information contained 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. Information for 2025 is not fully uploaded on the SPG system as yet.

Estimates Process

Each year the HSE participates in the Estimates Process with the Department of Health and makes a submission for additional monies to meet the health and social care needs of the population it services.

The Disability Service makes submissions for additional funding for Day, Residential, Respite, Home Support/PA hours, Multi Disciplinary Posts and Neuro Rehab monies as a key element of its submission. Any new funding secured is allocated to the RHOs to provide services to those with the greatest need (priority basis).

The HSE makes every effort to secure multi-annual investment for services via the Estimates process and is very conscious of the need to deliver disability policy on a more sustainable footing given the significant levels of need for increased and more effective services and supports to enable people with a disability to live independent lives in their own community.

The HSE recognises the value of Vision Ireland's support and services to people with visual impairment. While the HSE has made submissions for increased funding as part of the current budgetary process, any further increases in funding can only be considered within the parameters and scope of funding made available to the HSE.

Yours Sincerely,

~~Dr. Aoife O'Donohue,~~

Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúntóir, Seirbhísí Mhíchumas, Rochtain agus Imeascadh,
Assistant National Director, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination, Access & Integration