



10th November 2023

Thomas Gould, TD
Dáil Eireann
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Dublin 2.

PQ45279/23

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 1788 of 11 September 2023, how the funding for each CHO will be spent; who decides which community and voluntary organisations will receive the funding; and what role will LDATFs/RDATFs play in allocating this funding.

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive have been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

I can confirm that funding has transferred out to the CHOs. Funding is being allocated in line with the criteria identified in the guidance document issued by the Department.

For the Deputy's information, please find attached the 'Funding to maintain the existing level of drugs and inclusion health services provided by community and voluntary organisations: Guidance for HSE Community Healthcare Organisations' document.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Doyle
National Lead, Social Inclusion





Funding to maintain the existing level of drugs and inclusion health services provided by community and voluntary organisations

Guidance for HSE Community Healthcare Organisations

1. Background

Hildegarde Naughton TD, Minister of State for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, has approved €3.5 million in recurring funding to maintain the existing level of drugs and inclusion health services for provided by community and voluntary organisations. This funding is targeted at services facing increased costs for service provision. It complements the once-off inflation funding, which provided €3.9m to drugs and inclusion health services in 2023.

Existing level of services (ELS) refers to the increased costs for providing the same level of service, primarily arising from increases in price or volume. It excludes costs related to providing an entirely new service, which would fall under new service developments.

The funding will be allocated by HSE community healthcare organisations (CHOs) to eligible services in their region. The Department of Health has prepared this guidance on ELS funding for CHOs.

2. Policy Approach to ELS Funding

The €3.5m ELS funding for drugs and inclusion health services is designed to:

1. meet the demand for existing services,
2. address specific challenges in service delivery, eg costs, access,
3. ensure a sustainable approach to service provision.

The ELS funding supports the strategic priority to enhance access to and delivery of drug services in the community, under the National Drugs Strategy for 2021-2025. Funding will also support the strategic priority in the Department of Health's Statement of Strategy 2021-2023, to expand and integrate care in the community (known as enhanced community care). It aligns with the Programme

for Government commitments to strengthen community-based care, including primary care and social care, in order to advance Sláintecare reforms.

ELS is provided for existing services. The expected outcome is to improve health outcomes for people who use drugs and inclusion health services. Based on the aims of ELS, three criteria for allocating the funding have been identified (see section 3 below).

In allocating this funding, CHOs should engage with drugs and inclusion health service providers and, where appropriate, other relevant coordinating structures e.g. drug and alcohol task forces. CHOs should prioritise services that have not received additional resources in recent years (such as new development funding or the Community Services Enhancement Fund). They should also avoid overlap with the separate review of costs for residential drug treatment services.

A strategic approach should be adopted in the use of this funding, to ensure tangible benefits for service users and to support sustainable improvements in service provision.

3. Criteria for allocating the funding

I. Enhanced community care:

The funding should support the provision of existing drug and inclusion health services as part of community care structures. This includes the integration of drugs and inclusion health services with Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs).

II. Service delivery, access and innovation:

Funding should support the delivery of existing frontline services and enable access to these services by under-served communities. It should support quality improvement initiatives (including service user involvement), innovative ways of delivering services and the upskilling and retention of staff providing frontline services.

III. Measurable outputs and outcomes:

The additional funding should be linked to tangible and quantifiable service outputs and outcomes. The funding must be evidence-based and include objective ways to measure outputs and outcomes.

4. Allocations per CHO

The 3.5 million recurring funding is allocated using a population-based resource allocation model, as set out in the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023. The allocation will be as follows:

- CHOs 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6 will each receive €330,000
- CHOs 4, 7, 8 & 9 will each receive €445,000
- CHO 6 will receive an additional €71,000 for a HSE coordinator post for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force

Each CHO will determine how the additional funding is allocated to drugs and inclusion health services, in line with the criteria above.

5. Reporting and monitoring

The HSE will furnish a report on the allocation of the ELS funding by CHO and the expected outputs in terms of service delivery, to the Department of Health. The report will also outline how outputs will be monitored as part of the Service Level Arrangement process.

References

- [gov.ie - Health Ministers announce €81 million in once-off funding for voluntary and community providers \(www.gov.ie\)](#)
- [gov.ie - Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023 \(www.gov.ie\)](#)
- [gov.ie - Department of Health Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

Drugs Policy and Social Inclusion Unit