



Working for People with Sight Loss



Pre - Budget Submission 2022



Introduction

NCBI (National Council for the Blind of Ireland) is Ireland's national sight loss agency. Our mission is to transform the lives of people who are blind or vision impaired so they can live confidently and independently. At NCBI, we believe people who are blind or vision impaired should have the same opportunities, rights and choices as others to fully participate in society. According to the most recent Census figures (2016), there are currently 54,810 people with sight loss in Ireland. This is a figure we know to be on the rise, from the increase in demand we have witnessed for our own services in the past five years. In 2020, we offered support and services to approximately 8,000 people who are blind or vision impaired. Of this figure, 2,000 were new referrals to NCBI.

A society in which blind or vision impaired people can fully access, participate and contribute in economic, cultural and social life, requires a robust, rights-based and holistic approach by government. NCBI's pre-budget submission 2022, outlines key areas of government spending and services which need to be enhanced to support and empower, Ireland's community of people living with sight loss. While most of the proposed provisions and developments detailed pre-date the Covid-19 pandemic, NCBI urges government to act on each of the asks outlined, to reduce the additional vulnerabilities experienced by people who are blind or vision impaired since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. This submission outlines the needs of Ireland's sight loss community in the context of Health, Housing, Employment, Education, Social Protection, Funding of Disability Services and Culture, Leisure and Sports.

For further information on NCBI please see <https://www.ncbi.ie/>

For further information on this submission please contact june.tinsley@ncbi.ie or 087 9955076.



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Executive Summary

Health

- Additional funding of approx. €10.8million
- Expand Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLO's) service countrywide with 7 posts in total = €490,000
- The point of care for appropriate conditions, such as wet AMD, out of acute hospitals into primary care settings in the community.
- Recruitment of 50 additional ophthalmologists = €10.3 million
- Standardisation of the Technical Aids Grant scheme run by the HSE
- Production of CHO-segregated annual figures by the HSE related to adults and children with a diagnosis of vision impairment, and their engagement with health and/or disability services= €45,000.

Housing

- Authorisation of NCBI as an Approved Housing Body.
- A ringfenced funding allocation of the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme & Improvement Works, for use when adapting housing to bespoke requirements of an applicant who is blind or vision impaired.
- Publication of annual figures by The Housing Agency related to those availing or requesting housing support, segregated by disability or specialised housing need.
- In accordance with the EU Web Accessibility Directive, invest in revised digital transformation to facilitate online application system for housing support and transfers for people with sight loss.

Executive Summary

Employment

- Further development and financing of the Disability Awareness Support Scheme by the Department of Social Protection (€500,000)
- Commitment to the review of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund and Employee Retention Scheme both administered by Dept of Social Protection.
- Development of a hybrid working model with specific Technical Aids Grant supports for remote working.
- Extension of Work Place Grants to State Agencies and Charities.

Education

- Adoption of a national Transition Year programme for students who are blind or vision impaired, with ringfenced funding of an additional €150,000 per annum.
- As part of career guidance training, information and understanding of the challenges that face students with sight loss must be included.
- Access to immediate assistive technology, similar to the Disability Federation of Ireland's 'Lifelong Assistive Technology' proposal.

Disability Services Funding

- Fully fund Section 39 organisations to ensure ability to meet the entire cost of delivering the roll out of services.

Executive Summary

Social Protection

- Increase to basic social welfare rate for the Blind Pension and Disability Allowance by €20.
- Publication of the Cost of Disability report as a matter of urgency.
- Inclusion of all those with a long-term eye condition which renders their level of vision insufficient to meet criteria for a drivers licence in the Free Travel Scheme = €70,700.
- In accordance with the EU Web Accessibility Directive, facilitate online application methods for social protection services through Welfare.ie
- Mandate all HSE offices to offer the Blind Welfare Allowance payment electronically to recipients going forward.

Digital Access

- Create a Digital Accessibility fund to allow for Govt Dept, State Agencies, schools and hospitals to comply with the Govt Legislation around the EU Web Accessibility Directive.



Budgetary Savings Between 2017-2020

The table below details the monies returned to the Exchequer by each Department between 2016 and 2020. NCBI are acutely aware of the financial implications of the ongoing pandemic. However the monies returned to the Exchequer below display an ability by each Department to reallocate funding to support the changes in policy we are calling for as part of Budget 2022.

Department	Budgeted monies returned to the exchequer per year				Total
	2017	2018	2019	2020*	
Education & Skills	24.54m	114.464m	6.263m	138m	283.26m
Employment Affairs & Social Protection	20.019m	38.887m	51.460m	857.211m	967.75m
Health	2.369m	4.468m	4.919m		11.756m
Housing & Local Government	4.33m	13.165m	6.511m		24.006m
Total	51.21m	170.98m	69.15m	995.21m	1.286b

Table: Monies returned unspent to the Exchequer

**All figures for 2020 are provisional until the conclusion of the departmental audits /Comptroller and Auditor General audits*

2. Health

2.1 Extension of the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) Service

NCBI introduced Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) in 2019 in the Mater, Temple Street and the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear hospital. This service was extended to Crumlin Children Hospital in 2020. ECLOs perform a key role within the clinics, liaising with clinical staff, providing valuable information and emotional support, and assisting the patient in accessing community rehabilitation services at the critical time of diagnosis. They also provide ongoing support when a patient is discharged from medical care. This releases clinicians to focus on their clinical support for patients, while ensuring patients' holistic needs for information and ongoing support are met.

“As the cataracts developed, my sight was slipping away. When my appointment finally came around, I was almost entirely housebound, and had to wait another few months for the corrective surgery. I’d never dealt with anything like this before, and I wasn’t sure where to go for help. Meeting the ECLO at the clinic was a huge support to me and my family”.

- NCBI Service User



The gross salary of an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer averages at €60,000 per annum. NCBI are requesting a full rollout of 7 posts across the state at a cost of €420,000 per year, with an additional €60,000 for a locum ECLO post where required to cover leave.

2. Health

Our ask

Allocation of a total of 7 ECLOs across all acute hospital settings. Ringfenced government funding to sustain the ECLO programme until at least 2026.

2.2 Dedicated treatment pathways for AMD

Age related macular degeneration is the most common cause of sight loss in Ireland among people over the age of 50, estimated to currently affect 7% of that population. AMD affects the macula of the retina, a small area located at the back of the eye, resulting in a loss of central vision. There are two main types of AMD - dry AMD and wet AMD – with around 10-15% of people with dry AMD progressing to develop wet AMD. Whilst less common than dry AMD, wet AMD can develop faster resulting in a rapid loss of vision. In most cases, if diagnosed and treated early, deterioration in vision can be slowed, maintained, or recovered. To achieve early detection and rehabilitation, patients need prioritised diagnostic and treatment pathways. Knowing the signs of AMD will allow for people to present earlier to a GP, and with an expedited and specialised AMD diagnostic service will allow for earlier detection.

Our ask

Implement recommendations made in the Primary Care Eye Services Report (2017) to move the point of care for appropriate conditions, such as wet AMD, out of acute hospitals into primary care in the community

2. Health

2.3 Ophthalmic Waiting List

Recent figures published by the HSE found 16,739 people are experiencing a delay of 18 months or more in ophthalmic outpatient appointments as of January 2021. This number has been increasing since 2017. Many of our service users experience a deterioration in their sight and some may experience irreparable damage to their vision while waiting for these appointments and are unsure of where they can access supports once a diagnosis of a sight-loss condition has been confirmed.

According to the Irish Medical Organisation (2019) the recommended number of consultants posts in ophthalmology is 147, but presently there is only 41. This needs to be increased as a matter of urgency. While it is not practical to hire 100 ophthalmologists' given the difficulties recently experienced by the Irish health service, NCBI would prioritize a doubling of the current posts as a matter of urgency for the sight loss community.

According to the Economic and Social Research Institute, the average gross salary of an ophthalmologist with five years' experience falls around €207,037. The cost of hiring an additional 50 full-time consultants would arrive in the region of €10,351,850 per annum.

Our ask

Actively recruit 50 Ophthalmic Consultants across the HSE services, as a starting point to address the current shortfall.
Actively recruit a further 25 consultants per year as part of the Budget 2023 and 2024 in order to full address the shortfall.

2. Health

2.4 Technical Assistance Grant (HSE)

Despite the significance of assistive technology for people who are blind or vision impaired, funding for assistive technology within the Technical Aids Grant administered by the HSE is fragmented across each CHO area. Currently, there is no standardisation of eligibility criteria, assessment, or funding of assistive technology applications across the country. Many people are unable to afford the upfront costs of essential assistive technology and must go without. There is also very little information available to those wishing to apply for the grant.

Our ask

Standardisation of the HSE Technical Aids Grant funding and assessment practices across the country, with eligibility extended to those over 65.



2. Health

2.5 Information Gathering

A repetitive theme within this pre-budget submission will be the distinct lack of data and statistics related to the sight loss community in Ireland. While NCBI has made every effort to make our data available to researchers and state bodies, we have noticed there is an overall gap in timely data collection and publishing by state bodies in relation to blindness and vision impairment. While data is collected by the state Census, this is a self-declared data set, and is only collected once every five years.

Due to the Covid19 pandemic restrictions, the 2020 Census was deferred, meaning the information available to those wishing to research sight loss and the overall disability prevalence are working from a dataset which is over six years old. While the Census is an excellent source of holistic data, the time delay is quite significant. Furthermore, children and young people living with sight loss are relatively invisible in data current available. For the state to fully realise and plan for the rights and needs of children and young people who are blind or vision impaired, robust data must be collated and made available.

In order to remedy this, NCBI suggest as part of Budget 2022, an additional data base administrator post should be introduced to either the HSE or Health Research Board with a specific focus on gathering data related to children and adults with a diagnosis of sight loss in Ireland. The average salary of a database administrator is €45,000 per annum. This dataset should be available in an interactive form, like that provided by the CSO when publishing Census data and provide desegregated data on the numbers of people in Ireland who are blind or vision impaired, including data on those who are engaged with health services and disability services. This data needs to be desegregated into counties and/or CHO areas to properly identify and assess service provision needs. The introduction of this service would finally allow for accurate research and planning of services to take place.

Our ask

One additional post within the HSE or Health Research Board focusing on gathering and providing data on children and adults who are blind or vision impaired across the state.

3. Housing

The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) data found 7.4% of people with a disability indicated they had experienced discrimination when trying to access housing between 2004 and 2014. It is unclear from the data whether this discrimination was specific to a particular disability subset, whether it was more common in particular parts of the country, or whether those reporting it were seeking social or private housing at the time. It indicates that individuals with a disability are more than twice as likely to perceive discrimination as those without a disability (3.5%).

The report authors concluded this may be due to the fact that people with disabilities are also more likely to be excluded from the labour market. The authors also discussed the discrimination experienced by people with disabilities in the type of housing tenure they have. During their discussion, they highlighted the likelihood of being discriminated against is considerably higher among Local Authority renters, and even more so among private renters with a disability.



3.1 Approved Housing Body status for NCBI

Government have a chance as part of Budget 2022 to extend accessible and independent living to people who are blind or vision impaired. While some local authorities have begun to standardise their processes of assessment for housing on medical grounds, retrofitting or design of social housing supports can still create accessibility issues for people with sight loss. As the national sight loss agency in Ireland, NCBI already have a variety of tailored supports and assessments in operation for service users to support them in their everyday lives. NCBI can provide this expertise to local authorities so more suitable accommodation is provided to social housing tenants who are living with sight loss. In addition, NCBI is proactively seeking Approved Housing Body status to provide bespoke social housing units for people who are blind or vision impaired.

Our ask

NCBI authorised as an Approved Housing Body by The Housing Agency

3.2 Assistive Technology Budget for Local Authority Housing

While assistive technology is a term many may identify with education or employment, it is also available and in use within the home. The introduction of 'smart' devices which allow a user to voice activate their functions have been largely welcomed by the sight loss community. As technology has advanced, so too have the features it can offer to people who are blind or vision impaired. In order to best support our service users in their everyday lives, NCBI would urge the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Climate Change to establish a fund for local authorities to adapt housing for the bespoke needs of a social housing applicant who is blind or vision impaired.

Our ask

An increase of funding to the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme & Improvement Works in order to meet the bespoke requirements of an applicant who is blind or vision impaired.

3.3 Information Gathering

The lack of quality and timely accessible data available for the sight loss community was previously dealt with in point 1.4 above and applies to housing too. NCBI suggest that an additional database administrator post would be introduced within The Housing Agency, with a specific focus on gathering data related to adults with a diagnosis of sight loss in Ireland who are availing of housing supports from the state. While the Housing Agency does provide an annual breakdown of those availing of housing support, the figures are not always disability specific, i.e. sight loss falls under the title of sensory disability, as does hearing loss.

The average salary of a database administrator is €45,000 per annum. This dataset would include data on those who are engaged with the various housing support options available from local authorities. Again, the introduction of such a service would allow for accurate research and planning of housing services to take place.

Our ask

Production of annual figures by The Housing Agency related to those availing or requesting housing support, segregated by disability or specialised housing need.

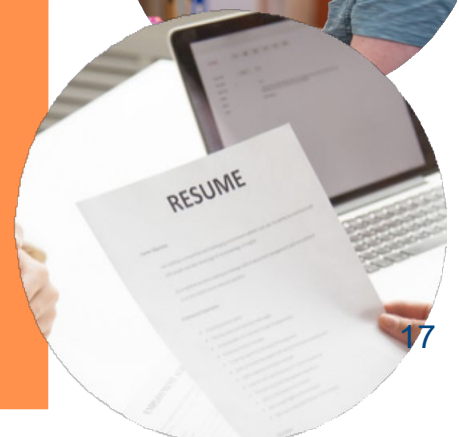
4. Employment

Employment figures for people who are blind or vision impaired in Census 2016 indicate the level of labour force participation is just 24.4% - one of the lowest rates in Europe. When compared with employment levels for the rest of the population at that time of 61.4%, this demonstrates a significantly low level of engagement or retention of people who are blind or vision impaired in employment.

There are a number of potential factors which may have caused this. Societal barriers such as employers' presumptions on what a candidate could accomplish, assistive technology delays and a lack of information available to employers about supports they are eligible for when employing a person with sight loss.

Furthermore, the interconnection between labour force activation and the social welfare system often causes poverty traps and fear of losing social welfare supports such as Blind Pension, Disability Allowance, or supplementary payments.

“On paper, I was always the perfect candidate. I'd always make it past shortlisting and phone interviews, but the biggest barrier for me was the face-to-face interviews. My prospective employers would see my cane and notice my nystagmus (involuntary eye movement). A rejection always followed – there was even one instance where a classmate from college who was less qualified and experienced as me got a job I'd interviewed for. It took an interview where I was treated just as a fully sighted applicant before I succeeded – because the focus was on my ability and not my sight loss. When I started that job, we were so long waiting for a decision on the adaptation grant that my manager just went out and purchased the 17” monitor I needed.” NCBI Service User.



4. Employment

4.1 Reviewing Employer Supports

While there are some supports available for the employers of a staff member who is blind or vision impaired, there have been relatively low levels of uptake on a number of these. In recent focus groups with NCBI service users, a number of issues were identified with supports such as the Reasonable Accommodation Fund, the Employee Retention Scheme, and other such supports. In order to identify the positive and negative aspects, and provide employee and employer led solutions to any potential issues, a full review should take place. This should include input from the departments responsible for the allocation of funds, as well as employers and employees who may be eligible for them.

Our asks

- Review of the current status of each recommendation made as part of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy.
- Further development of the Disability Awareness Support Scheme, in order to inform prospective employers about the supports that exist for their businesses when employing a person with a vision impairment or continuing the employment of a person with an acquired vision impairment or blindness.
- A review at cross-departmental level of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund to assess the delays reported by users, with a view to making changes which will encourage uptake of the scheme with employers and the self-employed.
- A review must also take place without delay into the Retention Scheme, which has very little uptake rates since 2016.

4. Employment

4.2 Remote Working Strategy

Due to the restrictions placed on workplaces related to Covid19, the opportunity to work remotely has been introduced to both the public and private sector in a very mainstream way. This is reflected in the development of the government's Remote Working Strategy. The inaccessibility of public transport and the built environment can act as a barrier for people who are blind, or vision impaired to engage in the workforce. While the inaccessibility of these structures and services is inexcusable and NCBI continue to advocate for change, these barriers can be reduced if the possibility of remote working is made more readily available for people living with sight loss.

The opportunity for this new way of working to be fully inclusive of those who are blind and vision impaired rests, however, on securing supports for those living with sight loss to successfully work from home. Supports and equipment for people living with sight loss working remotely should complement the office environment.

Ourask

Development of a hybrid working model with specific Technical Assistants Grants and Reasonable Accommodation supports for remote working.



5. Education

Education equality is a particular issue for young people who are blind or vision impaired, as sight loss can negatively affect a students' ability to integrate fully with the education curriculum. This is evidenced by the low level of participation of visually impaired students in third level or further education.

5.1 Primary and Secondary Education

In 2020, the NCBI Children and Young People's Team recorded over 1,000 children and young people with sight loss availing of their supports. NCBI Children and Young People's Team offers a range of supports to students in every stage of education under our Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). The ECC is used to define concepts and develop alternative skills and strategies to ensure children and young people meet their developmental milestones and can become independent. While offering these supports, NCBI has yet to be recognised as a complementary service provider by the state. NCBI Children and Young People's Team recently piloted a programme to support students with sight loss in Transition Year. As part of this pilot, a small cohort of students from different parts of the country were supported with assistive technology, communication and interview skills, and support with finding suitable work experience in a sector they have interest in. The overwhelming feedback from the programme from both students and work experience supervisors was positive and has allowed the student attain the experience which will shape their later career choices.

Our ask

NCBI is calling for recognition by the state as a complementary service provider. This will allow NCBI to strengthen and widen our ECC and become more individualized, equipped, and responsive to the needs of children who are blind or vision impaired.

Supported solutions for students who are blind or vision impaired in Transition Year programmes, with an initial funding of €150,000 per annum.

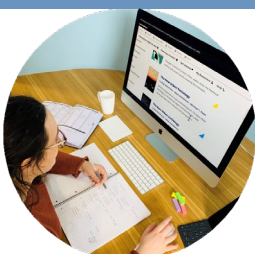
As part of career guidance training, information and understanding of the challenges that face students with sight loss must be included.

5.2 Further Education

There are extremely low levels of registration of students with vision impairment in higher education nationwide. Data from AHEAD shows that in 2019 / 2020, only 1.8% of students registering with a disability at third level (undergraduate and postgraduate) had a vision impairment. Since 2013, this proportion has dropped, whilst the number of students registering with disabilities overall has increased. At 1.8%, students who are blind or vision impaired represent the second smallest category of students with a disability in third level education. NCBI advocates for increased supports and services to ensure supported transitions and equal access for all students who are blind and vision impaired.

Our ask

Supported education transition solutions for students with vision impairment must be a priority for the Minister for Education, the Junior Minister for Special Needs Education, and the Minister for Higher Education.



5.3 Assistive Technology

Between 2017 and 2020, an average of 29% of the assistive technology budget allocation went unspent by the NCSE. This may indicate that students who were accounted for as part of the allocation did not avail of the assistive technology reports they were deemed to require.

Year	Allocation €	Actual Expenditure €	Variation €	Variation as a percentage
2017	See note *	2,444,727	See note*	See note**
2018	2,956,583	2,382,785	-573,798	-19%
2019	3,493,593	2,577,180	-916,413	-26%
2020**	3,498,527	2,013,236	-1,485,291	-42%

Table 1: Assistive Technology Budget and allocations 2017-2020, NCSE

*The assistive technology allocation for pupils with SEN was included within an overall allocation for special educations initiatives. Therefore, a specific annual allocation for assistive technology is not available for 2017.

**All figures for 2020 are provisional until the conclusion of the departmental audits / Comptroller and Auditor General audits.

The DARE and HEAR access routes can be invaluable to a student to demonstrate how their sight loss has impacted their second level education, However, it may not facilitate a complete and accurate picture of how a delay in supports have potentially impacted a student's education.

In 2017, the “Lifelong Assistive Technology” was launched by the Disability Federation Ireland as a solution for the assistive technology gap which occurs when transitioning from education, employment, or general everyday life. This proposal would allow for the technology to remain with the user throughout changes in their work, education, or home life. Accessing teaching supports such as assistive technology and learning support at third level remains a significant barrier. The lack of adoption of universal good practice in inclusive education and significantly overstretched disability supports systems results in students continuously citing difficulties in accessing learning. Thankfully the roll out of the Bookshare platform ensures that for the first time ever students with a vision impairment have access to their required course materials at the same time as their sighted peers.

Our asks

- Access to immediate assistive technology, similar to the Disability Federation of Ireland’s ‘Lifelong Assistive Technology’ proposal.
- Continuity funding for the “Bookshare Ireland” programme.

6. Social Protection

While the social welfare system in Ireland has gone through a number of changes since its inception at the foundation of the State, there are still aspects of the system which need improvement. A large proportion of people who are blind or vision impaired will qualify for payments such as Blind Pension or Disability Allowance

NCBI has welcomed the recent increase in the income disregard which brought it to €140 per week, which may provide a safety net for our service users who may be contemplating returning or entering the workforce.

6.1 Inadequacy of the basic social welfare rate

38.1% of people with disabilities in Ireland are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the fifth worst among the European countries (European Disability Forum's Human Rights Report 2020). NCBI are acutely aware of the poverty and social exclusion faced by many people in the sight loss community. NCBI and Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (2017) research into the Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) found that the cost of living for a single adult with vision impairment is €44.54 higher than a person without a disability. This is 18% more per week than the costs faced by a single adult in the main MESL budgets in the general population. While NCBI welcomes the other supports available to people living with sight loss, these figures demonstrate that basic social welfare rates do not factor in the additional costs of living faced by people with a vision impairment.

Further research is needed to fully identify the financial cost faced by individuals who have a disability, including sight loss, in Ireland. NCBI welcomed the commissioning of a report into the cost of disability, however, the report is yet to be published, consequentially leaving this data gap, and the communities it impacts, invisible.

Our asks

- The Department needs to increase the basic social welfare rate for the Blind Pension and Disability Allowance by €20 per week.
- The Department of Social Protection needs to publish the Cost of Disability report as a matter of urgency.

6.2 Free Travel Scheme

The Free Travel Scheme is a support provided by the Department of Transport and the Department of Social Protection. It is of huge value to people living with sight loss, as it allows them use public transport across the country without incurring the barrier of cost. This supports the ideal of independent living in the community and is a scheme NCBI hopes to see continue.

However, we currently have approximately 700 service users who are unable to access the Free Travel Scheme but whose sight is too poor to obtain a drivers licence. Eligibility criteria for access to the free travel scheme should be changed to include those with a long-term eye condition, which renders their level of vision insufficient to meet criteria for a driver's licence. The approximate cost of making a Travel Pass available to the 700 NCBI service users currently without one is €70,700 per annum.

Our ask

Inclusion of all those with a long-term eye condition which renders their level of vision insufficient to meet criteria for a drivers licence in the Free Travel Scheme.

6.3 Accessing Social Protection Supports Independently

The Department of Social Protection do offer additional payments, however many of our service users indicate they struggle significantly with the inputting of information on paper applications. Service users often require the assistance of friends and family as well as NCBI staff to complete these applications, which sometimes prevents them from applying for supports that would be of assistance.

There is a recurring request from NCBI service users to have the option to submit applications to the Department of Social Protection online. This online facility also needs to comply with the European Web Accessibility Directive to ensure the interface is fully accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired.

Our ask

Improved access to electronic social protection services through Welfare.ie, with a view to moving Blind Pension, Blind Welfare Allowance, Disability Allowance, and the related payments to an online submission system.



6.4 Access to Blind Welfare Payment Electronically

Regional variations still exist in the payment of Blind Welfare Allowance with many people living with sight loss facing difficulty in attempting to access the payment. The payment is coordinated by the HSE, however some HSE offices are unwilling, despite the Covid19 pandemic, to make the payment automatically available via bank transfer, forcing service users to travel unnecessarily to their local HSE office to collect a cheque, which they then must deposit in their bank. This system is not only outdated and unnecessary, but it is putting people at risk by forcing them to travel to access their payment.

Our ask

Mandate all HSE offices to offer the Blind Welfare Allowance payment electronically to recipients going forward.

“My local HSE office has refused from the very beginning of the Covid19 pandemic to deposit the Blind Welfare Payment electronically. The only option they give is to travel to the post office and collect the cheque, in person. I live with my elderly parents and accessing public transport is difficult for me, especially with social distancing in place. As a result, I haven't been able to collect the payment in over a year” -
NCBI Service User

7. Disability Sector: Section 39 Funding

Historically, the Irish Government have been funding to Section 39 organisations to provide essential services to people with disabilities. However, this funding has consistently fallen short of what it costs to run and provide those services. This puts these organisations under constant financial strain and has implications in the retention and hiring of staff. These challenges were acknowledged in the Report of the Independent Review Group established to examine the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health and personal social services, known as the Catherine Day Report and published in February 2019. Although, there has been some dialogue on these issues, many of the recommendations of this important report have not yet been adopted.

Our ask

Fully fund the Section 39 organisations to ensure ability to meet the full cost of service delivery. The reliance on bucket collections to fund essential vision rehabilitation services is outdated and inequitable.



Sources and Further Reading:

Census 2016:

- Types of Disability - CSO - Central Statistics Office

Comptroller and Auditor General

- Appropriation Accounts 2019: Vote 26 - Education and Skills (audit.gov.ie)
- Appropriation Accounts 2018: Vote 26 Education and Skills (audit.gov.ie)
- Appropriation Accounts 2017: Vote 26 Education and Skills (audit.gov.ie)

Economic Research Institute:

- Pay scales: Homepage | ERI Economic Research Institute (erieri.com)

Oireachtas Library and Research Service:

- Parliamentary Question 29605/21: Departmental Budgets – Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil)



www.ncbi.ie

Infoline: 1850 33 43 53



NCBI Whitworth Road
Drumcondra
Dublin 9

NCBI Group: CHY 20902
NCBI Services: CHY 4626
NCBI Retail: CHY 20619 NCBI
Charitable Foundation: CHY 12673