

The Health Boards are responsible for providing health and community care services to all the population and they also have responsibility for a range of services for people with disabilities. Health boards employ Directors of Disability Services who are responsible for co-ordinating all the services for people with disabilities. The health boards are responsible for providing health and hospital services as well as community and respite care services. They are also responsible for a range of services for people with disabilities including rehabilitative training, sheltered workshops and long stay accommodation. These services are sometimes provided directly but may also be provided through voluntary organisations.

People with disabilities are assessed for entitlement to medical cards on the same basis as everyone else. The prescribed drugs and medicines for certain long term illnesses are free of charge and the Drugs Payment Scheme means that the maximum payable in one month is €70. Dental, optical and aural services may be provided by the DSFA or the health board. You may get help with buying aids and equipment from the health board or from private health insurance.

Medical Card

Medical Card holders are entitled to a range of health services free of charge. These include doctors, prescribed drugs, hospital services and dental, optical and aural services. Medical Cards are subject to a means test but hardship cases can be dealt with individually on merit. If you feel you need a medical card you should apply for one.

Medical Card Income Guidelines

Income Threshold (per week) based on income less PRSI only, €

	Single (living alone)	Single (living with family)	Married Couple
Under 66 years	138.00	123.00	200.00
66–69 years	151.00	130.00	224.00
70–79 years*	-	-	447.50
80 years and over*	-	-	471.00

Additional allowances

Child under age 16	25.00
Dependant over 16 years	26.00
Outgoings on house, excess over	25.00
Expenses travelling to work, excess over	22.00

Note: Medical Card income guidelines are revised in January each year.

*All people aged 70 or over are entitled to a medical card without a means test. This medical card covers the applicant only and does not cover dependants.

Persons aged 16 to 25, dependent on their parents, will not be entitled to a medical card unless their parents also hold a medical card.

HEALTH SERVICES

Hospital Charges in a Public Ward

There is a charge of €40 per day for in-patient services in a public ward. This is subject to a maximum of €400 in any period of 12 consecutive months. Medical Card holders are exempt from these charges as are children referred from child health clinics and school health examinations. There is a provision for non-payment in cases of hardship. In this case you should write a letter to the hospital explaining your circumstances.

Out-Patient Charges

There is no outpatient charge if you are referred by a doctor but otherwise a €40 charge applies to your initial visit to a hospital for a health problem. Medical Card holders are exempt from the charge.

Free Travel to Health Services

Social Welfare recipients or their dependants who incur ongoing travel expenses for treatment may be entitled to a Travel Supplement. In order to qualify you must satisfy the general conditions for receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance. You can apply to your local Community Welfare Officer in the Health Centre.

Long-term Illness Scheme

Under this scheme drugs, medicines and some approved appliances prescribed for the treatment of the following medical conditions are available free of charge: Mental handicap, phenylketonuria, cystic fibrosis, haemophilia, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, diabetes mellitus, diabetes insipidus, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease, acute leukaemia, spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

Drugs Payment Scheme

A scheme for those without medical cards where an individual/family pay only the first €70 per month of costs incurred on prescribed drugs and medicines. Application forms are available from your local pharmacy or Health Board.

Nursing Home Subvention

A subvention may be paid towards the cost of a private nursing home of your choice, where you have been assessed as needing nursing home care by the Health Board but you are unable to meet the cost and you pass a means test. You should apply to your Health Board before going into the nursing home as you can be debarred from claiming a subvention for two years if you apply after admission.

Maximum Rate

€

Medium Dependency	114.30
High Dependency	152.40
Maximum Dependency	190.50

Dental, Optical and Aural Services

Health Boards provide hearing aids as well as dental and optical services free of charge to Medical Card holders. Check with your Health Board for approved service providers. The Department of Social and Family Affairs provides dental, optical and aural (hearing) benefits under the Treatment Benefit Scheme for insured workers who have paid sufficient PRSI contributions. People who qualify are entitled to receive up to half the cost of hearing aids up to a maximum of €700 (January 2003) for each hearing aid. People who are receiving Invalidity Pension or long-term Disability Benefit would normally also be entitled to these benefits. Treatment is provided by private dentists and opticians/ophthalmic surgeons.

HEALTH SERVICES

Application forms are available from:

Social Welfare Services Office, St. Oliver Plunkett Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

Tel (01) 704 3000, LoCall 1890 400 400

Aids and Appliances

Medical and surgical aids and appliances (e.g. wheelchairs, walking aids) are usually free of charge to Medical Card holders providing they are recommended by a doctor or a health professional. Non-Medical Card holders may get such aids and appliances free if they are part of hospital treatment. If not, they may get some assistance from the Health Board which may contribute to the cost or may lend them if they are only required for short-term use. It is always wise to contact Disability Services in the Health Board to see if any assistance can be got as each board has its own rules in this respect.

Refund of Value Added Tax (VAT)

A refund of VAT may be claimed for certain aids and appliances used by a person with a disability to assist them with independent living and working. Claim forms available from:

VAT (Unregistered) Repayments Section, Revenue, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Tel: LoCall 1890 202 033

Information on Aids and Appliances

Comhairle provides a telephone information service on aids and appliances, including equipment suppliers.

For further information contact:

Comhairle, 44 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1.

Tel. (01) 874 7503

Assist Ireland, which is being developed by Comhairle, will provide an online information resource on Assistive Technology for people with disabilities supported by a helpline number 1890 277 478 during working hours.

Website: www.assistireland.ie

Other voluntary organisations dealing with particular disabilities may also provide advice and information on aids as well as supplying them e.g.

The Irish Wheelchair Association,

Central Remedial Clinic,

National Association for Deaf People,

National Council for the Blind.

Contacts and Further Information

Health Boards

Eastern Regional Health Authority,
Main Customer Service
Department, Dr. Steevens' Hospital,
Dublin 8.
Tel: Freephone: 1800 520 520

East Coast Area Health Board,
Southern Cross House,
Southern Cross Business Park,
Boghall Road, Bray,
Co. Wicklow.
Tel: (01) 201 4200
Director of Disability Services:
Mr. John O'Sullivan

Northern Area Health Board,
Swords Business Campus,
Balheary Road,
Swords, Co. Dublin.
Tel: (01) 813 1800
Director of Disability Services:
Ms. Violet Harford

South Western Area Health Board,
Oak House,
Limetree Avenue, Millennium Park,
Naas, Co. Kildare
Tel: (045) 880 400
Locall: 1890 737 343
Director of Disability Services:
Paudie Galvin

Mid-Western Health Board,
31/33 Catherine Street,
Limerick.
Tel: (061) 316 655
A/Director of Disability Services:
Ms. Patricia McLarty

Midland Health Board,
Arden Road,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Tel: (0506) 21868
Director of Disability Services:
Ms. Breda Crehan-Roche

North Eastern Health Board,
Navan Rd,
Kells, Co. Meath.
Tel: (046) 928 0500
Director of Disability Services:
Mr. Leo Kinsella

North Western Health Board,
Manorhamilton,
Co. Leitrim.
Tel: (071) 982 0400
LoCall: 1850 636 313
Regional Disabilities Manager:
Mr. Dermot Monaghan
Tel: (071) 985 2900

South Eastern Health Board,
Dublin Road,
Lacken,
Kilkenny.
Tel: (056) 778 4100
Regional Co-ordinator for
Disability Services:
Ms. Ann Kennelly

Western Health Board,
Merlin Park Regional Hospital,
Galway.
Tel: (091) 751 131
Regional Co-ordinator
for Disability Services:
Ms. Patricia Tully

Southern Health Board,
Áras Sláinte,
Dennehy's Cross,
Wilton Rd
Cork.
Tel: (021) 454 5011

Intellectual Disability Services:
Ms. Gabrielle O'Keeffe
Physical/Sensory
Disability Services:
Ms. Deirdre Scully

Treatment Benefit

Department of Social and
Family Affairs
Social Welfare Services Office,
St. Oliver Plunkett Road,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
Tel (01) 704 3000,
LoCall 1890 400 400

Citizens Information Centres (CIC)

For further information on rights
and entitlements, contact your
local Citizens Information Centre -
listed in the Golden Pages