

DOWN SYNDROME IRELAND WATERFORD & SOUTH KILKENNY BRANCH

PROPOSAL FOR 2017 FUNDING SCHEME

It is proposed to continue the members funding scheme for 2017. The rules of the scheme are clarified below, as agreed by the the Branch Committee. The funding cap remains unchanged at €500. **Payments will be made approximately on a quarterly basis.**

As previously, the claim form will be used to encourage participation in fund-raising and/or branch activities, and claimants will be asked to tick boxes indicating future willingness or availability of family members for branch or fund-raising activities.

Members are encouraged to use the resources in the branch resource library (or to request the inclusion of the resource in the library), rather than purchasing and claiming for it under the scheme. Members are also requested to maximise any available funding from other sources (e.g. tax/vat rebates, insurance claims, social-welfare grants) and to only claim for the balance under the scheme.

The list of qualifying expenses is summarised at the end, and only these will qualify automatically for funding. Members may apply to the Branch Committee making a case to have additional activities or therapies added to the list of qualifying expenses for the following year, or for funding for specific relevant expenses which are not on the list, but which might qualify in exceptional circumstances.

Qualifying Expenses:

1. Funding may only be claimed by paid-up members. For new or lapsed members (i.e. who have not paid a subscription in the previous year), the cap will be adjusted pro-rata depending on which month the membership subscription is received.
2. 50% of receipted expenses (up to the maximum annual cap) will be paid for the following;
 - a. Approved life enhancing activities (not organised by the Branch). These are activities which the branch would aspire to organise as group activities because of their life enhancing/learning benefits to members. The funding is provided for situations where individual arrangements are more practical or convenient than a branch organised activity, or where the branch is unable to organise the activity. The current list of qualifying activities are: swimming lessons, horse riding classes, dance classes, and membership of Special Olympic Clubs.
 - b. Some activities which are organised by the branch may qualify for funding, unless they are already substantially subsidised by the Branch. Members will generally be informed whether a Branch activity qualifies when provided with information on the activity (examples include Keep Fit, Drumming, Branch Swimming Club, Cookery Classes, etc).
 - c. Relevant Special Educational aids/materials such as books, software, etc.
 - d. Latch-On Fees and other Special Education & Training Courses (but not including regular school fees).
 - e. Registration fees for relevant seminars or meetings which benefit members.
 - f. Aids or appliances which qualify for a vat refund from the revenue commissioners (VAT 61A Claim for VAT refund on aids and appliances for people with disabilities). In

this case, 50% of the pre-vat expense will be paid, and the claimant must produce evidence that the appliance qualifies for the vat refund.

- g. Respite expenses where the member is not in receipt of a respite grant.
3. 100% of receipted expenses (up to the maximum annual cap) will be paid for the following;
 - a. Speech & language therapy, occupational therapy, or physiotherapy. Where members receive an insurance payment or other funding in relation to such therapies, they are expected, in good faith, to declare this and only apply for the balance.
 - b. Aids or appliances which have been recommended by a doctor or therapist (a letter of recommendation will be required). Members are expected to claim the vat back on qualifying expenses (VAT 61A Claim), and therefore funding will be based on the value excluding vat (up to the funding cap).
 - c. Audiology & Ophthalmology Expenses.
 4. It is proposed that Non-qualifying expenses will include;
 - a. Equipment and appliances unless they qualify for a vat refund or have been recommended as detailed above.
 - b. Activities which are already subsidised by the branch. Members will be informed when a non-qualifying activity is offered by the branch.
 - c. Respite expenses where the member is in receipt of a respite grant.
 - d. Membership subscriptions.
 - e. Ordinary recreational activities (e.g. event entrance fees, music CDs, beauty therapy, etc.) or non-Branch activities which are not listed in 2a.
 - f. Ordinary school fees.
 - g. Travel or accommodation expenses.
 - h. Medical expenses (G.P. Visits, alternative therapies, etc.)

Other Guidelines:

1. All qualifying expenses incurred between January and December of a particular year will be subject to the funding cap for that year.
2. A claim form must be completed detailing the expenses for which funding is being sought. Payment will only be made for expenditure for which receipts are presented (or where evidence of a vat refund or recommendation is provided where relevant), and which qualifies under the scheme as broadly outlined above. The member may lodge an appeal to the committee where the funding paid is less than the funding claimed, or is declined. An appeal will be considered on its merits by the committee and their decision is final.
3. Receipts will not be returned and copies should be retained for your own records if required.
4. Receipts will only be accepted from the provider of the service and not from a 3rd party such as a day service. The receipt must be signed by the person providing the service, preferably be on headed paper, and must detail the service provided.
5. It will be a requirement to complete a fundraising participation form prior to making a claim.
6. Members are reminded that some resources may be available through the branch resource library, or that a request can be made to make a particular resource available in the library, and are encouraged to use these resources rather than purchasing and claiming for them.

7. Claimants are reminded that this scheme has been put in place, in good faith, so that activities/services which are particularly beneficial to our members, are made more affordable for the member and/or his/her family. The future viability of the scheme is dependent on the fundraising efforts of the members, and the generosity of our donors. These guidelines are intended to help ensure that funding is deployed effectively to assist our members for as long as possible into the future. Members are requested to maximise any available funding from other sources (e.g. tax/vat rebates, insurance claims, social welfare grants) prior to making a claim for the balance (or 50% of the balance) under this scheme.

Summary Of Qualifying Expenses

The following list can be used as a guide as to what can be claimed for;

1. Swimming Lessons
2. Dance/Drama classes.
3. Fitness (e.g. Gym Membership, fitness classes, weight management, special Olympics)
4. Horse Riding Lessons
5. Summer Camps (Fitness or Educational based)
6. Education Courses (Computer Classes, Independent Living, Latch-On, etc)
7. Special Needs Educational materials (Numicon, Books, Software, etc)
8. Relevant Seminar/Workshop Registrations (Branch organised activities are generally subsidised and not claimable)
9. Aids/Appliances for which a vat refund has been made by revenue (50%)*.
10. Aids/Appliances which have been recommended by a doctor PT, OT, or SLT (100%)*
11. Fees for private SLT, PT, OT. (100%)
12. Audiology & Ophthalmology fees (100%)

*Written evidence must be provided.

February 2017