

## **DOWN SYNDROME IRELAND WATERFORD BRANCH - PROPOSAL FOR 2013 FUNDING SCHEME**

It is proposed to continue the members funding scheme for 2013. The rules of the scheme remain unchanged, except that the funding cap is increased to €600 per year, as agreed at the Branch Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

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 newly established 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.

### **Proposed 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 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. Recreational activities such as swimming, horse riding, dance classes. These are activities which the branch would aspire to organise as group activities because of their life enhancing/social 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. Approval for additional activities will be at the discretion of the committee.
  - b. Relevant Special Educational aids/materials such as books, software, etc.
  - c. Educational courses or classes attended by members (i.e. members with Down Syndrome).
  - d. Attendance at relevant seminars or meetings which benefit members.
  - e. 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.
  - f. Other expenses as deemed appropriate by the committee.
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. Other expenses as deemed appropriate by the committee.
- 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.

**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. It will be a requirement to complete a survey section on the claim form to indicate willingness/availability to participate in future fundraising and/or branch activities.
5. 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.
6. 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.