

Ombudsman Investigation Report - Mobility Allowance

Appendix 1

Department of Health
Hawkins House, Dublin 2



An Roinn Skáinte
Teach Haicín, Baile Átha Cliath 2

TEL (01) 784322 EXTN.
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REF.
Circular No. 15/79

8 Lunasa, 1979

HB/D4(N)/0002

Chief Executive Officer
Each Health Board

Mobility Allowance Scheme

1. I am directed by the Minister for Health to state that a scheme for payment by health boards of mobility allowance at the rate of £150 per annum for severely handicapped persons will be introduced with effect from 1st September, 1979. The scheme applies to persons in the age group 16 to 66 years who are unable to walk and who would benefit from occasional trips away from home.
2. Although eligibility is confined to persons who are normally living at home, mobility allowance may continue to be paid in respect of occasional stays in hospital of up to 8 weeks, as in the case of Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance.
3. As stated, an applicant must be under pensionable age. However, an allowance, once granted, will be continued after this age as long as the other criteria for eligibility are met.
4. A means test should be applied similar to that which is operated for the purposes of the Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance. It seems likely that most of those who qualify for mobility allowance will already be in receipt of Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance.
5. The essential medical criterion for the grant of the allowance is that the applicant is unable to walk, even with the use of artificial limbs or other suitable aids, or is in such a condition of health that the exertion required to walk would be dangerous. It is necessary that this criterion should be interpreted strictly. The inability to walk has to be likely to persist for at least one year and the applicant must not be forbidden for medical reasons from being moved. For the purposes of a meeting with Programme Managers and Directors of Community Care and Medical Officers of Health on 26th July, notes on relevant medical conditions were circulated. Further copies of these notes may, if required, be obtained from this Department.

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6. It will be a matter for the Director of Community Care and Medical Officer of Health to decide whether the medical criteria are satisfied in any case. It would be advisable for directors to brief general medical practitioners in their areas on the scope of the scheme, as medical certificates must be submitted with applications for the allowance.
7. Cases which have been accepted for payment of an allowance should be reviewed at appropriate intervals to establish that they continue to meet the criteria for eligibility.
8. An explanatory statement for the information of enquirers and a form of application for the allowance are enclosed as Appendix 1 to this circular. Copies of the statement and application form are being printed and supplies will be issued to health boards as soon as possible.
9. Statistics relating to the scheme should be kept in the form set out in Appendix 2 to this circular. Health Boards are requested to furnish returns in the first instance in respect of September to December, 1979 and thereafter for each calendar year.
10. Publicity about the commencement of the scheme on a national basis will be prepared by the Department and will be on the lines of the explanatory statement in Appendix 1. Health Boards should arrange for similar publicity locally.
11. The scheme will be subject to review from time to time.

Mise le meas



J. O'ROURKE

Appendix 1

Mobility Allowance for Handicapped Persons

A mobility allowance at the rate of £150 per annum for severely handicapped persons who are unable to walk will be introduced from 1st September, 1979. The scheme applies to persons in the age group 16 to 66 years who are living at home.

There will be a means test similar to that which operates for the purposes of the Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance, i.e. that by reason of disability, the applicant is unable to provide for his maintenance and his spouse, if any, is unable to maintain him. The basic medical conditions to qualify for payment of allowance are:

- the applicant is unable to walk, even with the use of artificial limbs or other suitable aids, or is in such a condition of health that the exertion required to walk would be dangerous.
- inability to walk has to be likely to persist for at least one year.
- the applicant must not be forbidden for medical reasons from being moved.
- the applicant must be in a condition to benefit from a change in his surroundings.

The scheme will be operated by the health boards. It will be a matter for the Director of Community Care and Medical Officer of Health to decide whether the medical criteria are satisfied in any case.

Allowances will be paid monthly.

Persons who consider that they satisfy the conditions of eligibility for the allowance should complete the attached application form and return it to the local office of the health board.

Mobility Allowance for Handicapped Persons

Part 1: for completion by applicant

To Health Board

Name:

Address:

Date of Birth

I wish to apply for mobility allowance. I consider that I satisfy the required conditions. I am/am not* in receipt of Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance.

Medical Card No. (if any):

Signed _____

Date _____

*delete as appropriate

Part 2: for completion by applicant's medical practitioner.

I have examined of He/She is suffering from I certify that by reason of this condition he/she is unable to walk and I expect that this inability will last at least one year from the date of this certificate.

Signed _____

Date _____