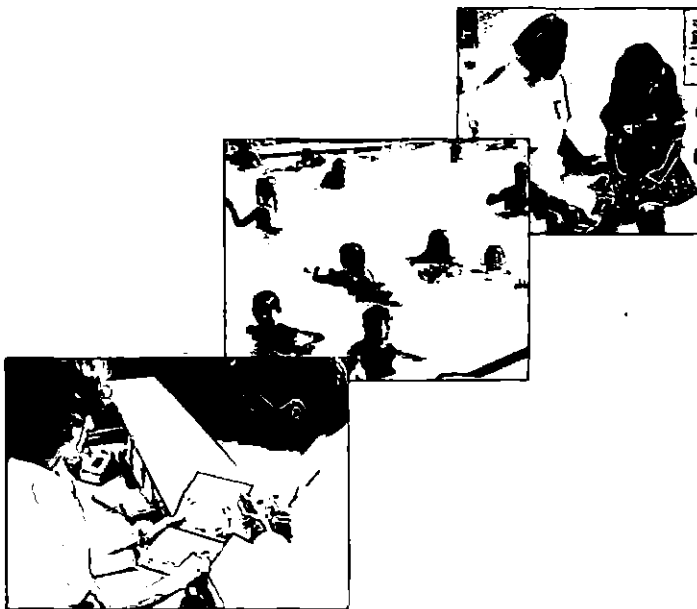


INFORMATION GUIDE TO OUR HEALTH SERVICES



Shaping a healthier future



INFORMATION GUIDE
TO OUR HEALTH
SERVICES

ISSUED BY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
1996



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FURTHER COPIES

Further copies of **Information guide to our health services**, and of the leaflet which accompanies it, are available free of charge from your local health board. Contact details for health boards are provided in the directory of useful addresses at the end of this booklet.

INFORMATION GUIDE TO OUR HEALTH SERVICES ON INTERNET

This edition of **Information guide to our health services** is available on INTERNET at <http://www.internet-eireann.ie/doh>

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH



As Minister for Health, I am committed to improving the responsiveness of our health services to consumer needs. It is essential that the general public, patients and their carers have access to accurate and detailed information on their entitlements to health services, and on the range of services and benefits available to them.

This guide is intended to help you establish your eligibility for health services and the basis on which you may make use of them. It also outlines the wide range of services which is available to you and to your family.

I hope that this guide proves a useful aid to everyone using our services.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Noonan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that spans the width of the text area.

Michael Noonan T.D.

Minister for Health.

INTRODUCTION

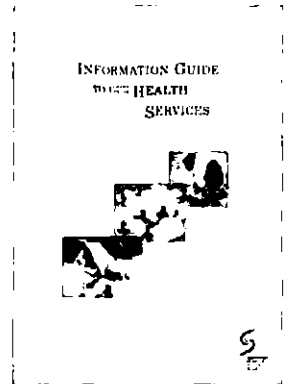
This guide is designed to explain your eligibility for health services, to outline the range of services and benefits provided and to indicate the basis on which you may avail of them.

Remember that more detailed information on local services is available from your health board. Contact details for health boards are provided on page 4.

Information guide to our health services is intended for use by the general public, by patients and their families and carers, and by staff in statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations involved in providing health-related information.

If you have any suggestions for improving the content or presentation of information in this guide, please contact, in writing only, the Library and Information Unit, Department of Health, Hawkins House, Hawkins St, Dublin 2.

Further copies of **Information guide to our health services**, and of the leaflet which accompanies it, are available free of charge from your local health board.



HEALTH BOARDS

Eastern Health Board
 Dublin city and county, Co.
 Kildare, Co. Wicklow.

Dr. Steevens Hospital,
 Dublin 8.
 (01) 6790700 or Freephone
 1800 520520.

Midland Health Board
 Co. Laois, Co. Longford, Co.
 Offaly, Co. Westmeath

Arden Rd, Tullamore,
 Co. Offaly.
 (0506) 21868.

Mid-Western Health Board
 Co. Clare, Limerick city and
 county, Co. Tipperary (N.R.)

31-33 Catherine St,
 Limerick.
 (061) 316655.

North-Western Health Board
 Co. Donegal, Co. Leitrim,
 Co. Sligo.

Manorhamilton,
 Co. Leitrim.
 (072) 55123.

South-Eastern Health Board
 Co. Carlow, Co. Kilkenny,
 Co. Tipperary (S.R.), Co.
 Waterford, Co. Wexford.

Lacken, Dublin Rd,
 Kilkenny.
 (056) 51702.

Southern Health Board
 Cork city and county, Co.
 Kerry.

Cork Farm Centre,
 Dennehy's Cross, Wilton Rd,
 Cork.
 (021) 545011.

North-Eastern Health Board
 Co. Cavan, Co. Louth, Co.
 Meath, Co. Monaghan.

Navan Rd, Kells,
 Co. Meath.
 (046) 40341.

Western Health Board
 Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, Co.
 Roscommon.

Merlin Park Regional Hospital,
 Galway.
 (091) 751131.

ENTITLEMENTS TO HEALTH SERVICES

ENTITLEMENTS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Everyone who is ordinarily resident in Ireland has either **Category One** or **Category Two** eligibility for health services. These categories are explained in the sections which follow. The entitlements of visitors to Ireland, and of Irish people abroad, are also explained.

Eligibility for health services depends on personal income. It is not connected to Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions.

CATEGORY ONE ELIGIBILITY

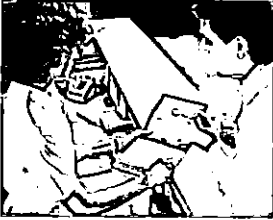
Persons with **Category One** eligibility receive a 'medical card' from their health board. Entitlement to a medical card is means tested. That is to say, it depends on personal income and circumstances. Income guidelines are revised in January each year. Current income guidelines are detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide. Those whose income exceeds these guidelines may qualify for a medical card if their health board considers that they are unable to provide necessary medical care for themselves or their family.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A MEDICAL CARD

Persons wishing to apply for a medical card should contact their local health board, which will provide an application form and advice on procedures to follow in making an application. In making an application, it is important to note the following points.

Married couples with separate income

Where a husband and wife have separate incomes, their application for a medical card is assessed on the basis of their combined income.



Dependants, students

A medical card normally covers the card holder, his or her spouse and any children under 16. It also covers any persons over 16, such as students, who are dependent on the medical card holder. Persons aged between 16 and 25, such as students, who are dependants of a person who is not a medical card holder, are not normally entitled to a medical card except:

- where they have entitlement under European Union (EU) regulations
- where they receive Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance (DPMA).

The decision on whether a person is regarded as a dependant or not is made by the health board on the basis of individual circumstances.

Students who are financially independent may apply for a medical card on the same basis as everyone else.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO PERSONS WITH CATEGORY ONE ELIGIBILITY

Persons in **Category One** are entitled to:

- general practitioner services
- prescribed drugs and medicines
- all in-patient public hospital services in public wards (including consultant services)
- all out-patient public hospital services (including consultant services)
- dental, ophthalmic and aural services and appliances
- a maternity and infant care service. This includes the

services of a general practitioner during pregnancy and general practitioner services for mother and baby for up to 6 weeks after the birth

- a maternity cash grant of £8 for each child born.

CATEGORY TWO ELIGIBILITY

Persons who are ordinarily resident in Ireland, but who do not qualify for a medical card, automatically have Category Two eligibility.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO PERSONS WITH CATEGORY TWO ELIGIBILITY

Persons in **Category Two** are entitled to:

- all in-patient public hospital services in public wards (including consultant services) subject to certain charges. Details of public hospital charges are provided in the leaflet which accompanies this guide
- all out-patient public hospital services (including consultant services). These exclude dental and routine ophthalmic and aural services, except in the case of referrals from a child health clinic or school health examination
- attendance at accident and emergency departments, subject to a charge where the patient does not have a referral note from his or her doctor. Details of public hospital charges are provided in the leaflet which accompanies this guide
- a maternity and infant care service. This includes the services of a general practitioner during pregnancy and general practitioner services for mother and baby for up to 6 weeks after the birth
- a refund of expenditure on prescribed drugs and medicines





in excess of a specified amount each quarter under the **Drug Refund Scheme (DRS)**. For further details, see page 19. Persons who, in the view of their doctor or consultant, suffer from a long-term medical condition with a regular and ongoing requirement for prescribed medicines, may qualify for the **Drug Cost Subsidisation Scheme (DCSS)**. For further details, see page 20.

- drugs and medicines for the treatment of certain specified illnesses under the **Long Term Illness Scheme**. For further details, see page 19.

ENTITLEMENTS OF PERSONS TAKING UP RESIDENCE IN IRELAND

Any person, regardless of nationality, who is accepted by their health board as being ordinarily resident in Ireland, has either **Category One** or **Category Two** eligibility to health services. For further details see pages 5-8.

A person with a social security pension from another European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) member state may qualify for a medical card regardless of their income, provided they are not in receipt of an Irish social welfare pension and are not in employment or self-employment.

ENTITLEMENTS OF VISITORS TO IRELAND

The entitlements of short term visitors (those who are not deemed by the local health board to be ordinarily resident in Ireland) are as follows:

- visitors from the United Kingdom are entitled to urgent medical treatment without charge, provided it is obtained at a public hospital or from a doctor participating in the

General Medical Service scheme. Evidence of residence in the United Kingdom is required - for example, social security documentation or driving licence

- visitors from other European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) member states are entitled to urgent medical treatment without charge, provided that they present the form E111, which should be obtained from the health authorities of their own country before travelling, and that the treatment is obtained at a public hospital or from a doctor participating in the General Medical Service scheme
- visitors from countries outside the EU and EEA may be charged for any treatment provided.

ENTITLEMENTS OF IRISH VISITORS TO OTHER COUNTRIES

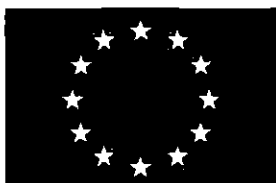
Short-term visits to other EU and EEA countries

Short-term visitors to another European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) member state, are entitled to urgent medical treatment on the same basis as residents of that country. It is essential, except in the case of the United Kingdom, to produce form E111 which should be obtained from the local health board before travelling. Persons intending to travel should also obtain information from their health board regarding the emergency medical services provided in the country, or countries, which they intend to visit.

Visits to other countries

Visitors to non-EU and non-EEA countries should arrange appropriate private medical insurance cover.





Longer stays or taking up residence in other EU and EEA countries

Persons in the categories listed below may be entitled to medical treatment for themselves, and their dependants living with them, in other EU and EEA member states on the same basis as residents of those countries. It is essential, except in the case of the United Kingdom, that they obtain the appropriate form from their health board in advance of travelling. The appropriate forms are indicated here:

- Irish students, who are dependants of persons resident in Ireland, who are studying on full-time registered courses in another EU or EEA country (form E106/109/111/121)
- Irish persons who are "posted workers" in other EU/EEA countries and are still obliged to pay Irish PRSI (form E106)
- Unemployed Irish persons looking for work (form E119). This form may be obtained from the Department of Social Welfare
- Irish persons taking up employment/self-employment and no longer obliged to pay Irish PRSI but obliged to pay into another EU or EEA member state's social security system (form E111 for brief transition period only, until such time as they qualify for health services in the new country of residence)
- Irish social welfare pensioners who transfer residence to another EU or EEA country (form E121):

Persons who require further information on how they may qualify for health services, or social security benefits, abroad, should contact both of the following, before travelling:

- the local health board (contact details for health boards are provided on page 4)

- EU Records Section, Department of Social Welfare, Floor 1, O'Connell Bridge House, D'Olier St, Dublin 2.
(01) 8748444.

REFERRAL FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT ABROAD

Persons may be authorised to receive medical treatment which is considered necessary, and which is not available in Ireland, in other European Union (EU) member states. Health boards may provide such authorisation by issuing form E112. Application for the issue of form E112 should be made by, or on behalf of, a patient in sufficient time to enable the health board to assess the application both from the point of view of determining the entitlement of the patient under the appropriate regulations, and his or her medical requirements. It will be necessary for the health board to establish that these requirements cannot be met locally or in any other centre within the country. Further details of this scheme are available from health boards.

CASES OF HARDSHIP

Health boards may provide services free of charge in cases of hardship to people who are not normally eligible for these services.

CHOICE OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE CARE

A person using public hospital services may choose to be a public or a private patient. The implications of this choice with regard to in-patient and out-patient services are as follows:

In-patient services

If a person chooses to be a public in-patient:





- he or she must use a public bed
- he or she is not the private patient of any consultant and does not pay consultants' fees
- if there is a waiting list, he or she will be placed on this list for a public bed.

If a person chooses to be a **private** in-patient:

- he or she must use a private or semi-private bed
- he or she is the private patient of his or her own consultant and any other consultants involved in his or her care (for example, radiologists, pathologists, anaesthetists). See page 14 for details on **consultants' fees** and page 17 for details on **private health insurance**
- if there is a waiting list, he or she will be placed on this list for a private or semi-private bed.

In a medical emergency, a patient will be accommodated in whatever bed is available at the time. In such a case, a private patient may be admitted to a public bed until a private or semi-private bed becomes available.

Out-patient services

If a person chooses to be a **public** out-patient:

- he or she attends a public out-patient clinic
- he or she is not liable for consultants' fees.

If a person chooses to be a **private** out-patient:

- he or she attends the consultant privately in the consultant's rooms or private clinic
- he or she is the private patient of any other consultants he or she may be referred to for out-patient services (such as diagnostic tests or X-rays)

- he or she is liable for consultants' fees. See page 14 for details on consultants' fees and page 17 for details on private health insurance.

It is important to note that dental and routine ophthalmic and aural out-patient services are available free of charge only to persons in **Category One** and to children referred from child health clinics and school health examinations.



PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND OTHER CHARGES

Public hospital charges

Charges are made for public hospital services provided to persons in **Category Two**.

If a person attends a hospital accident and emergency department without a referral note from their general practitioner he or she will be liable for a charge. This charge applies only to the first visit of any episode of care. It does not apply to attendances at out-patient clinics.

A daily charge applies to public hospital accommodation. This includes accommodation in public and semi-private wards, and private rooms. Patients will be charged for a maximum of ten days in any consecutive twelve month period. This limit applies regardless of the number of hospitals to which a patient is admitted. Patients should retain hospital receipts as evidence of payment. Payment of the maximum in-patient hospital charge does not exempt patients from accident and emergency department charges.

Current hospital charges are outlined in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.



DEPARTMENT
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Exemptions from public hospital charges

Persons in **Category One** do not pay public hospital charges.

Persons in **Category Two** are liable to these charges except in the following cases:

- women receiving maternity services
- children up to six weeks of age
- children receiving treatment for mental handicap, mental illness, phenylketonuria, cystic fibrosis, spina bifida, hydrocephalus, haemophilia or cerebral palsy
- children referred from child health clinics and school health examinations
- persons receiving services in respect of prescribed infectious diseases
- long-stay patients who are already being charged under the Health (Charges for In-Patient Services) Regulations.

Short term visitors from other European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) member states receiving urgent medical treatment are not liable for these charges. Such visitors, with the exception of United Kingdom visitors, should present form E III in all cases.

Health boards have discretion to waive public hospital charges in cases of hardship. Application should be made to the local health board.

Consultants' fees for patients in public hospitals

Patients in public hospitals are not liable for professional fees charged by consultants in respect of in-patient or out-patient services except where:

- the patient chooses to be a private patient of the consultant or

- the patient is in **Category Two**, and is availing of out-patient dental services or routine out-patient ophthalmic and aural services. This exclusion does not apply to referrals from a child health clinic or school health examination.

Charges for private and semi-private accommodation in public hospitals

Charges for private and semi-private accommodation in public hospitals are outlined in the leaflet which accompanies this guide. These charges are additional to the daily public hospital accommodation charge. See page 13.

Road traffic accidents

Where treatment is required as a result of a road traffic accident, and the patient may be entitled to receive compensation from a third party arising from the accident, a public hospital may charge the cost of providing treatment. The patient will be notified of charges when treatment has been provided. The account is payable when compensation is received. The health board or hospital which provides treatment may waive some or all of the charges in certain specified circumstances.

Ambulance and transport services

Each health board makes arrangements for the emergency and routine transport of patients. They may make a charge for such services. Details on the availability of ambulance and transport services, and on charges and refunds, are available from health boards.

Extended stay care

A person who has received in-patient services in a public

hospital for thirty days, or for periods totalling thirty days, in the previous twelve months, may then become liable to an extended-stay maintenance charge. Medical card holders and persons with dependants are exempt from this charge. It should, however, be noted that health boards may not consider that a person entitled to a medical card while living at home is necessarily so entitled while being maintained in an extended-stay institution.

Extended-stay maintenance charges are also payable by persons admitted to hospitals and homes for the elderly and other extended-stay accommodation in which the services provided are primarily of a non-medical kind. In such cases, charges apply from the date of admission, and may be payable by patients with incomes, including medical card holders and those with dependants.

Extended-stay maintenance charges are determined by health boards. Personal income, outgoings and other circumstances are taken into account. A reasonable amount is set aside for personal needs.

Public hospital in-patient charges are not applied to those already paying extended-stay maintenance charges.

Health contributions

All persons over 16 years with an income, subject to a lower limit, are liable to pay health contributions, with the exception of medical card holders, and persons in receipt of a Social Welfare Survivor's Pension, Deserted Wife's Benefit or certain Social Assistance Allowances. Employers, including farmers, are liable to pay health contributions in respect of employees who hold medical cards. The contribution is 1.25% of income. For PAYE taxpayers, the health contribution is payable through

the PRSI system. Self-employed persons or those with investment income should pay health contributions to the Revenue Commissioners.

PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

The Health Insurance Act 1994, which came into effect on 1 July 1994, was designed to allow for competition, and to regulate the Irish private health insurance market on foot of the Third EU Directive on Non-Life Insurance. The Act requires insurers to comply with the principles of community rating (an insurer must charge the same premium for a given level of benefits irrespective of age, sex or health status), open enrolment (an insurer is required, with certain qualifications, to provide cover to any individual who wishes to enrol) and lifetime cover (an insurer may not, with certain qualifications, refuse cover once an individual has been enrolled).

Insurers offering cover for hospital in-patient services will be required to provide a minimum level of benefits across a range of services, including general hospitals, out-patient and maternity benefits, convalescence, psychiatric treatment, substance abuse and day care.

Voluntary Health Insurance Board (VHI)

The Voluntary Health Insurance Board (VHI) is a not-for-profit organisation which provides insurance against the cost of treatment for sickness, injury or disease for those who wish to avail of private health care.

Full details of the health insurance schemes operated by VHI can be obtained from **VHI Head Office**, Lower Abbey St, Dublin 1 (01) 8724499 or from any other VHI office.



GENERAL PRACTITIONER SERVICES



GENERAL PRACTITIONER SERVICES

Provision of general practitioner services to persons with **Category One** eligibility (medical card holders) is regulated by a **General Medical Services (GMS)** contract between general practitioners and health boards. Eligibility for **Category One** is explained on page 5. As far as possible, health boards offer to persons with **Category One** eligibility a choice of general practitioners.

There are around 1650 general practitioners in the country who hold **GMS** contracts. Under the terms of these contracts, general practitioners are required to offer the same quality of service to **Category One** and private patients.

General practitioners are qualified to deal with the majority of illnesses which affect patients. Consequently, the general practitioner should usually be regarded as the first point of contact with the health services by persons who feel they need medical treatment or advice.

In cases where a general practitioner considers that further investigation or treatment is required, he or she will refer a patient to an appropriate specialist service. A patient who attends his or her general practitioner, and is given a referral note to a public hospital accident and emergency department, is not liable for the public hospital accident and emergency charge. No charges apply to attendances at public hospital outpatient clinics.

COMMUNITY DRUG SCHEMES

DRUGS AND MEDICINES FOR LONG-TERM ILLNESSES

Persons suffering from any of the following conditions, who are not already medical card holders, may obtain without charge the drugs and medicines for the treatment of that condition:

- mental handicap
- mental illness
(for persons under 16 only)
- phenylketonuria
- cystic fibrosis
- spina bifida
- hydrocephalus
- diabetes mellitus
- diabetes insipidus
- haemophilia
- cerebral palsy
- epilepsy
- multiple sclerosis
- muscular dystrophies
- parkinsonism
- acute leukaemia

Persons who suffer from any of these illnesses may apply to their local health board for admission to the long-term illness scheme. Once eligible, they are issued with a long-term illness book. This lists the drugs and medicines for the treatment of their condition which will be provided to them free of charge through their community pharmacist.

DRUG REFUND SCHEME (DRS)

Persons whose expenditure on prescribed drugs and medicines for use in a specified three month period, commencing on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July or 1 October, exceeds a specified limit, are eligible to claim a refund of their expenditure in excess of that amount. This includes expenditure in respect of dependants.

The current specified limit is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide. Persons who wish to apply for a

refund should submit a claim form, together with pharmacy dockets, to their health board at the end of the relevant quarter. The health board will make an appropriate refund. Claim forms are available from community pharmacists.

DRUG COST SUBSIDISATION SCHEME (DCSS)

The Drug Cost Subsidisation Scheme (DCSS) operates in conjunction with the Drug Refund Scheme (DRS). This scheme is available to persons who do not have a medical card or long-term illness book but who are certified as having a long-term medical condition with a regular and on-going requirement for prescribed drugs and medicines costing in excess of a specified monthly amount. The current specified monthly amount is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide. In order to qualify, the medical condition would usually be likely to last for at least twelve months.

Persons eligible for the Drug Cost Subsidisation Scheme (DCSS) are obliged only to pay the current specified monthly amount to their community pharmacist in respect of all prescription medication dispensed each month.

Unlike the Drug Refund Scheme (DRS), the Drug Cost Subsidisation Scheme (DCSS) covers the authorised card holder only and does not cover dependants. However, expenditure under this scheme is taken into account when determining the level of refund due in respect of a dependant under the Drug Refund Scheme (DRS).

Application forms for the Drug Cost Subsidisation Scheme (DCSS) are available from health boards.

CHILD HEALTH SERVICES



MOTHER AND INFANT CARE SERVICE

A mother and infant care service, including the services of a general practitioner during pregnancy and general practitioner services for mother and baby for up to six weeks after the baby is born, is available free of charge to all women.

IMMUNISATION

Immunisation is provided against a number of infectious diseases. The usual timetable for immunisation is given here. These vaccines are administered free of charge by general practitioners.

At Birth	BCG	
At 2 Months	Diphtheria Whooping Cough Tetanus Polio-given orally Hib	3 in 1
At 4 Months	Diphtheria Whooping Cough Tetanus Polio-given orally Hib	3 in 1
At 6 Months	Diphtheria Whooping Cough Tetanus Polio-given orally Hib	3 in 1
At 15 Months	Measles Mumps Rubella	MMR
About 5 Years	Diphtheria Tetanus Polio	Booster Booster Booster
12 to 14 Years (if not immune)	BCG	
10 to 14 Years (boys and girls)	MMR	



OTHER CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

The following services are provided free of charge by health boards:

- pre-school public health nursing service
- health examination service, including vision and hearing screening, for pre-school children and national school pupils
- all necessary follow-up services for defects discovered at these examinations
- dental, ophthalmic and aural treatment and appliances for defects discovered at these examinations
- preventive dental treatment for children up to fourteenth birthday.

Hospital in-patient and out-patient services are provided free of charge for all children aged under 16 who are suffering from any of the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| • mental handicap | • spina bifida |
| • mental illness | • hydrocephalus |
| • phenylketonuria | • haemophilia |
| • cystic fibrosis | • cerebral palsy. |

CHILD CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

CHILD CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Health boards are involved, in cooperation with the voluntary sector, in the provision of a range of child care and family support services. These include:

- investigation of suspected cases of child abuse and the provision of services for the treatment and support of victims of child abuse
- social work supports for those with a variety of needs, for example, families in difficulties, women experiencing violence in the home, single-parent families
- family resource centres
- day care services for children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- child guidance, counselling and advice centres.

The Child Care Act 1991 places a statutory duty on health boards to promote and protect the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. The emphasis is on providing support and assistance to families to enable children to remain at home. Where a child must be taken into care, the health boards, at the request of the parents or guardians or on the basis of a court order, arrange for the placement of the child in foster care, residential care, with relatives, or, on occasion, where the child is eligible for adoption, with adoptive parents.

Regulations under the Act govern the placement of children by health boards in residential care, foster care and with relatives. They require health boards to visit, supervise and review children in their care on a regular basis.

Under the Child Care Act, health boards are also obliged to

provide accommodation for homeless children up to the age of 18 years.

Persons concerned about the safety or welfare of a child should contact their local health board.

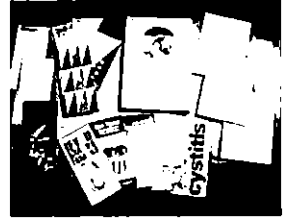
Persons who are interested in adopting children, whether in Ireland or abroad, should contact their local health board.

Further information concerning other child care and family support services is available from health boards.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR WOMEN

MATERNITY SERVICES

A maternity and infant care service is provided free of charge to all women. This includes the services of their general practitioner during pregnancy and general practitioner services, for mother and baby, for up to six weeks after the birth. It also includes in-patient and out-patient services in a public maternity hospital or in a maternity unit of a public general hospital. Health boards also provide public health nursing and personal social services. Further information on these services is available from health boards.



GYNAECOLOGY SERVICES

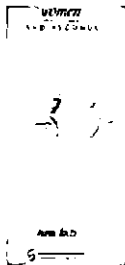
Treatment for gynaecological disorders is available from general practitioners who may also refer women to specialist gynaecology services. Specialist services for stress incontinence are also available through general practitioners.

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

Cervical smear testing is available to women through general practitioners, family planning clinics, maternity hospitals and special clinics organised by health boards. From 25 years of age, women should have cervical smear tests at least every three years.

BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer is the most common fatal cancer among women in Ireland. Women who are concerned about breast cancer should consult their general practitioner in the first instance. The Irish Cancer Society provides a national counselling service and also produces leaflets on breast cancer. Contact



details are provided in the directory of useful addresses at the end of this guide.

Breast screening services are currently being extended. The first phase of this programme will cover the Eastern, North-Eastern and Midland health board areas, and will target 120,000 women in the 50 to 64 age group.

FERTILITY SERVICES

Persons who are concerned about fertility should consult their general practitioner in relation to specialist services available.

MENOPAUSE

Symptoms of menopause may be discussed with the general practitioner who may refer a woman for specialist advice and treatment if required.

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

The health services support a number of refuges for women and children who are subject to violence in the home, and the provision of crisis support and counselling. These services are available in each health board area.

HEALTH EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

A range of leaflets on women's health issues is available, free of charge, from the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health. These include:

- Prevention of neural tube defects
- Family planning and contraception
- Toxoplasmosis
- Periods
- Women and alcohol
- AIDS - the facts

- Smoking and pregnancy
- Cystitis
- Hysterectomy
- The gynae book
- Miscarriage
- Sexually transmissible diseases.

FAMILY PLANNING

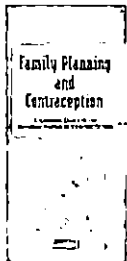
Family planning services are described on page 28 of this guide.

PREGNANCY COUNSELLING

Counselling services available to women with crisis pregnancies are described on page 29 of this guide.



FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES



FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

Family planning services are intended to give people freedom to decide on the number and spacing of their children.

Family planning information and services are provided by health boards, general practitioners, family planning clinics, maternity hospitals and units, and pharmacies. Family planning services include:

- education, counselling and advice on all legal methods of contraception
- access to natural methods of family planning
- access to contraceptives such as the pill, IUDs, diaphragms, spermicides and condoms
- male and female sterilisation services i.e. vasectomies and tubal ligations

Information on family planning services provided locally is available from health boards.

A leaflet on **family planning and contraception** is available free of charge from the Health Promotion Unit in the Department of Health, or from health boards.

FERTILITY SERVICES

Persons who are concerned about fertility should consult their general practitioner in relation to specialist services available.

PREGNANCY COUNSELLING

PREGNANCY COUNSELLING

Counselling is available to any woman facing a crisis pregnancy from general practitioners and from a number of voluntary organisations. The following organisations are in receipt of public funding for the provision of pregnancy counselling services:

- Cherish (01) 6682744
- CURA (01) 6710598
- Irish Family Planning Association (01) 8725033
- LIFE (01) 6798989
- PACT (01) 4976788
- Well Woman Centre (01) 6610086.

These organisations also provide services outside the Dublin area. Contact details may be obtained by telephoning the numbers listed here, or by consulting local area telephone directories.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY



ENTITLEMENTS TO HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

Elderly people, ordinarily resident in Ireland, have either **Category One** or **Category Two** eligibility for health services. These categories are explained on pages 5-8 of this guide. This section also outlines the range of services available to persons in each category.

Persons with a social security pension from another European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) member state may qualify for **Category One** eligibility (medical card) regardless of their income, where they are not in receipt of an Irish social welfare pension and are not in employment or self-employment.

A useful guide, **Entitlements for the over sixties** (18th edition, revised June 1995) is available free of charge from the National Social Service Board. See the directory of useful addresses at the end of this guide for further details.

NURSING HOMES SUBVENTION

The Health (Nursing Homes) Act 1990 is intended to ensure high standards of accommodation and care in private and voluntary nursing homes registered by health boards, and to provide for a system of subvention which targets assistance to dependent persons most in need of nursing home care.

In order to qualify for a subvention, persons must be assessed by a designated officer of a health board as being in need of nursing home care and without the means to pay for that care. There are three weekly subvention rates which a health board may pay. These relate to the degree of nursing care a person requires as assessed by the health board, the person's income and that of their spouse, their assets and their family circumstances.

Further information, and a free leaflet on nursing homes subvention, is available from health boards.

OTHER HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

Additional services provided by health boards to the elderly include:

- public health nursing
- home help and meals-on-wheels services
- day care services
- physiotherapy, occupational therapy and chiropody services
- hospital services, including assessment and rehabilitation
- extended and respite care for dependent elderly people and their carers. These services are provided in health board hospitals and homes, or in private nursing homes.

Contact details for health boards, together with an indication of the areas they serve, are provided on page 4 of this guide.



SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Health boards administer a range of benefits, schemes and services for people with disabilities. These are outlined in this section. Contact details for health boards are provided on page 4 of this guide.

DISABLED PERSONS MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance (DPMA) is a weekly allowance paid by health boards to persons who are unable to work due to a disability. DPMA is subject to a medical and means test. Further details regarding conditions of eligibility and application forms are available from health boards. The current rate of payment is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.

The administration of DPMA will transfer to the Department of Social Welfare during 1996. The change will be widely publicised.

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE

A monthly **Mobility Allowance** is payable, subject to a means test, to disabled persons who are unable to walk, and who would benefit from a change in surroundings. The scheme applies to persons aged between 16 and 66 years. Further details are available from health boards. The current rate of payment is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.

DOMICILIARY CARE ALLOWANCE

Domiciliary Care Allowance is paid monthly by health boards in respect of children with a disability aged between 2 and 16

years who live at home and who require care and attention which is considerably in excess of that normally required by a child of the same age. Eligibility is determined primarily by reference to the degree of care and attention required by the child rather than to the type of disability involved. The parents' means are not taken into account when assessing eligibility. The child's means are assessable. Further details are available from health boards. The current rate of payment is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.



BLIND WELFARE ALLOWANCE

Blind Welfare Allowance is paid weekly by health boards to unemployed blind people who satisfy a means test. It may be paid to recipients of **Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance** (see page 32) or a blind pension. Further details are available from health boards. The current rate of payment is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.

MOTORISED TRANSPORT GRANT

Health boards may make a grant for the conversion of a motor vehicle or for the purchase of an adapted vehicle for use by a person with a disability. The vehicle must be essential to the person to enable him or her to earn a living, or to persons with a disability living in very isolated areas. This grant is subject to a means test. Further details are available from health boards.

DRUGS AND MEDICINES

Persons suffering from any of the following conditions may obtain without charge the drugs and medicines for the

treatment of that condition. See page 19 for further details.

- mental handicap
- mental illness
(for persons under 16 only)
- phenylketonuria
- cystic fibrosis
- spina bifida
- hydrocephalus
- diabetes mellitus
- diabetes insipidus
- haemophilia
- cerebral palsy
- epilepsy
- multiple sclerosis
- muscular dystrophies
- parkinsonism
- acute leukaemia.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Hospital in-patient and out-patient services are provided without charge to children aged under 16 years who are suffering from any of the following conditions:

- mental handicap
- mental illness
- phenylketonuria
- cystic fibrosis
- spina bifida
- hydrocephalus
- haemophilia
- cerebral palsy.

COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

Health boards provide a range of community based services to people with disabilities. These include:

- public health nursing services
- home help service
- social work services
- chiropody
- occupational therapy
- physiotherapy
- speech therapy.

Health boards also arrange assessments of people with disabilities, and are involved in securing suitable day care and residential services.

Voluntary organisations provide a wide range of services to people with disabilities, including, information, counselling, home, day and residential care, social work support, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Health boards provide mental handicap services in cooperation with a number of voluntary agencies. These services include assessment, support, day care, residential care and financial allowances. Further details are available from health boards or mental handicap agencies.

JOB TRAINING

Health boards may pay training fees in respect of people with disabilities who are considered suitable for training for employment. Trainees may also qualify for maintenance allowances during training. The National Rehabilitation Board coordinates vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in order to place them, where possible, in employment. Further details are available from health boards or the National Rehabilitation Board

TECHNICAL AIDS AND APPLIANCES

Medical and surgical aids and appliances are usually supplied without charge to medical card holders (**Category One**). Those who do not qualify for a medical card (**Category Two**) may receive these aids and appliances without charge if they form part of hospital treatment. For details on **Category One** and **Category Two** eligibility, see pages 5-8 of this guide.



RATES OF PAYMENT OF BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Current rates of payment for each of the allowances covered in this section are detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.

CONTACT ORGANISATIONS

Contact details for health boards, and other organisations dealing with people with disabilities are provided in the directory of useful addresses at the end of this guide.

The National Social Service Board produces an information booklet on **Entitlements for people with disabilities** and the **Directory of national voluntary organisations, social service agencies and other useful public bodies**. Full details are provided in the list of useful publications at the end of this guide.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS

ENTITLEMENTS TO HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS

Persons suffering from a mental illness, ordinarily resident in Ireland, have either **Category One** or **Category Two** eligibility for health services. These categories are explained on pages 5-8 of this guide. This section also outlines the range of services available to persons in each category.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS

A range of services is provided to people suffering from mental illnesses. These include:

- general practitioner services
- in-patient services
- specialist out-patient services in hospitals and day-centres
- community residences
- rehabilitation and vocational training
- domiciliary visiting by community psychiatric nurses
- persons with a mental illness may be entitled to Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance (DPMA), subject to certain requirements. Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance (DPMA) is a weekly allowance paid by health boards to persons who are unable to work due to a disability. DPMA is subject to a medical and means test. Further details regarding conditions of eligibility and application forms are available from health boards. The administration of DPMA will transfer to the Department of Social Welfare during 1996. The change will be widely publicised.

FOOD SAFETY

AT HOME
WITH
FOOD HYGIENE



FOOD HYGIENE

Food manufacturing and wholesale premises, shops and restaurants are inspected regularly. The cooperation of the general public is also essential to promoting high standards. Lapses in hygiene should be brought to the attention of management. If a satisfactory response is not received, the Environmental Health department of the local health board should be contacted. Contact details for Environmental Health Officers are provided here.

FOOD SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

The Food Safety Advisory Board is responsible for assessing information on food safety and zoonotic diseases. It advises the Minister for Health on matters relating to food law, nutrition and scientific cooperation. Contact details are included in the directory of useful addresses at the end of this guide.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS

**Eastern Health Board
Chief Environmental Health
Officer**

Ormond House,
Ormond Quay,
Dublin 1.

(01) 8735199

**Midland Health Board,
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

Health Centre,
Arden Rd,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly.

(0506) 41301

**Mid-Western Health Board
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

St. Camillus's Hospital
Shelbourne Rd,
Limerick.

(061) 326677

**North-Eastern Health Board,
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

County Clinic,
Navan,
Co. Meath.

(046) 21595

**North-Western Health
Board,
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

Community Care Office
Ballybofey,
Co. Donegal.

(074) 31391

**South-Eastern Health Board,
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

County Clinic,
James Green,
Kilkenny.

(056) 52208

**Southern Health Board,
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

Abbey Court House,
George's Quay,
Cork.

(021) 965511

**Western Health Board,
Principal Environmental
Health Officer,**

Community Care Offices,
Newcastle Rd,
Galway.

(091) 23122

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

AIDS
The Facts



IMMUNISATION

A range of infectious diseases, such as diphtheria, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps and rubella, can be prevented through childhood immunisation. A primary childhood immunisation service is available to everyone without charge. Full details on childhood immunisation are provided on page 21 of this guide.

Immunisation against Hepatitis B is recommended for people in certain high risk employments.

For persons travelling abroad, compulsory and recommended immunisations are detailed in the leaflet **General health information for people travelling abroad** which is available free of charge from the Health Promotion Unit in the Department of Health.

HOSPITAL TREATMENT FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Persons receiving treatment for prescribed infectious diseases are exempt from statutory in-patient and accident and emergency hospital charges.

ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

HIV testing, together with counselling and support for anyone who is concerned that they may have been at risk of infection, is available in all sexually transmitted diseases clinics listed below, and also in drug treatment centres in the Eastern Health Board.

In-patient hospital services for persons with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are provided in major acute hospitals.

A free leaflet on HIV and AIDS is available from the Health Promotion Unit in the Department of Health.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STD)

Treatment for sexually transmitted diseases is provided at sexually transmitted diseases (STD) clinics in the following hospitals:

Dublin

Mater Hospital. (01) 8301122 ext. 2063

St. James's Hospital. (01) 4537941 ext. 2315/2316

Cork

South Infirmary / Victoria Hospital. (021) 966844

Limerick

Regional Hospital. (061) 301111 ext. 2168/2273

Waterford

Regional Hospital. (051) 73321

Galway

University College Hospital. (091) 525200

Sligo

Sligo General Hospital. (071) 70473

A leaflet on **sexually transmitted diseases** is available free of charge from the Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health, or from health boards.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance is paid, subject to a means test, to people undergoing treatment for tuberculosis and certain other infectious diseases. The current rate of payment is detailed in the leaflet which accompanies this guide.



DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE



DRUG MISUSE

Persons who are concerned about drug misuse should contact their health board, which will put them in contact with an appropriate treatment or counselling agency.

ALCOHOL MISUSE

Persons who are concerned about alcohol misuse should consult their general practitioner, who may refer them for specialist counselling and treatment.

CONTACT ORGANISATIONS

Contact details for health boards are provided on page 4 of this guide. Other useful contacts in relation to drug misuse and treatment include:

Drug Treatment Centre.

30-31 Pearse St.

Dublin 2.

(01) 6771122

Coolmine Therapeutic Community.

19 Lord Edward St.

Dublin 2.

(01) 6793765 (01) 6794822

Talbot Centre.

29 Upper Buckingham St.

Dublin 1.

(01) 8363434

Baggot Street Clinic.

Haddington Rd.

Dublin 4.

(01) 6602149

City Clinic.

Amiens St.

Dublin 1.

(01) 8749365

Aisling Clinic.

Ballyfermot.

Dublin 10.

(01) 6232200

Community Awareness of Drugs (CAD).

6 Exchequer St.

Dublin 2.

(01) 6792681

Anna Liffey Drug Project.

13 Lower Abbey St.

Dublin 1.

(01) 8786899

Merchant's Quay Project.

4 Merchant's Quay.

Dublin 8.

(01) 6790044 (01) 6771128



HEALTH PROMOTION



HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT

The Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health develops policies and implements preventive and promotional programmes which aim to improve people's health and quality of life. The unit coordinates, with other statutory and voluntary agencies, multi-sectoral health promotion programmes, and provides resources and support to those involved in health education and personal development activities. Health boards also develop health promotion initiatives.

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The Health Promotion Unit coordinates a number of national programmes. These include:

- smoking cessation
- alcohol awareness
- AIDS awareness
- lifestyle programmes
- nutrition education
- cancer prevention.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The Health Promotion Unit produces information materials on a wide range of health-related topics. These include:

- baby and child health
- hygiene for children
- alcohol
- women's health
- smoking
- health while travelling
- drugs and solvent abuse
- AIDS and other communicable diseases.
- nutrition and eating disorders

A full list of leaflets is available on request from the Health Promotion Unit. Health promotion leaflets are also available

from health boards. The unit also maintains a selection of videos on health-related topics, which are available for loan without charge to health and education professionals.

HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT PUBLIC OFFICE

The Health Promotion Unit public office is situated on the ground floor, Department of Health, Hawkins House, Hawkins St. Dublin 2. (01) 6714711

Opening hours are Monday to Friday
09.30-13.00 and 14.00-17.00.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

BIRTHS

Parents are encouraged to act as informants in respect of their childrens' births, and to sign the register of births, at the office of the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths. The hospital, or in the case of homebirths the midwife, will advise parents of the Registrar's name, address and opening hours.

MARRIAGES

In the case of Roman Catholic marriages, the husband is obliged to return a statutory form of marriage to the Registrar. This should be signed by both husband and wife, by two witnesses and by the celebrant. For all other marriages, the marriage is registered at the time the ceremony takes place.

DEATHS

The nearest relative present at death, or in some cases the hospital, should act as informant at the office of the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths. The informant must produce to the Registrar a medical certificate of the cause of death signed by a registered medical practitioner.

STILLBIRTHS

Either parent may register a stillbirth occurring on or after 1 January 1995 at the office of the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths within 42 days of the birth. Either parent may also register stillbirths which occurred before 1 January 1995 at the Registrar's office. In these cases, specific evidence must be produced to the Registrar in order to effect registration. A stillbirth certificate may be obtained at the time of registration.

CERTIFICATES OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

Certificates of births, deaths and Roman Catholic marriages may be obtained from the local Registrar (see health board listings in local area telephone directories), and also from the General Register Office, Joyce House, 8/11 Lombard St. East, Dublin 2.

Certificates of non-Roman Catholic marriages may be obtained in some instances from the Registrar of (Civil) Marriages (see health board listings in local area telephone directories for Registrar of (Civil) Marriages) and from the General Register Office, Joyce House, 8/11 Lombard St. East, Dublin 2.

Certificates of stillbirths and of entries in the adopted children register may be obtained from the General Register Office, Joyce House, 8/11 Lombard St. East, Dublin 2.

DIRECTORY OF USEFUL ADDRESSES

Department of Health,
Hawkins House,
Dublin 2.
(01) 6714711

Department of Social Welfare,
Aras Mhic Dhiarmada,
Store St,
Dublin 1.
(01) 8748444

Food Safety Advisory Board,
c/o Department of Health,
O'Connell Bridge House,
D'Olier St,
Dublin 2.
(01) 6714711

HEALTH BOARDS

Eastern Health Board,
Dublin area.

Eastern Health Board,
Dr. Steevens Hospital,
Dublin 8.
(01) 6790700
Freephone 1 800 520520

Kildare area.
Eastern Health Board,
Poplar House,
Poplar Square,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.
(045) 876001

Wicklow area
Eastern Health Board,
Glenside Road,
Wicklow,
Co. Wicklow.
(0404) 68400

Midland Health Board.
Arden Road,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly.
(0506) 21868

Mid-Western Health Board.
31-33 Catherine St,
Limerick
(061) 316655

North-Eastern Health Board.
Navan Road,
Kells,
Co. Meath.
(046) 40341

North-Western Health Board.
Manorhamilton,
Co. Leitrim.
(072) 55123

South-Eastern Health Board.
Lacken,
Dublin Road,
Kilkenny,
(056) 51702

Southern Health Board.
Cork Farm Centre,
Dennehy's Cross,
Wilton Road,

Cork.
(021) 545011

Western Health Board.
Merlin Park Regional Hospital,
Galway.
(091) 751131

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Disability Federation of Ireland,

2 Sandyford Office Park,
Dublin 18.

(01) 2959344 (01) 2959345

Irish Cancer Society,

5 Northumberland Rd,
Dublin 4.

(01) 6681855

Irish Heart Foundation,

4 Clyde Rd,
Dublin 4.

(01) 6685001

Mental Health Association of Ireland,

6 Adelaide Rd,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin.

(01) 2841166

National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland,

5 Fitzwilliam Pl,
Dublin 2.

(01) 6766035

National Rehabilitation Board,

25 Clyde Rd,
Dublin 4.

(01) 6684181

National Social Service Board,

71 Lower Leeson St,
Dublin 2.

(01) 6616422

Voluntary Health Insurance Board,

VHI House,
Lower Abbey St,

Dublin 2.

(01) 8724499

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

The following publications may be useful to members of the public, to patients and their carers, and to staff in statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations dealing with health-related issues. There are charges for some of these publications.

Directory of national voluntary organisations, social service agencies and other useful public bodies 1994-1995. 8th.edition-1994.

Available from National Social Service Board, 71 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6616422

Relate

Available from National Social Service Board, 71 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6616422

Entitlements for the over-sixties. 18th.edition - 1995.

Available from National Social Service Board, 71 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6616422

Entitlements for people with disabilities. 5th.edition -1995.

Available from National Social Service Board, 71 Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6616422

Guide to social welfare services. SW4.

Available from Department of Social Welfare, Aras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store St, Dublin 1. Tel: (01) 8748444

Irish medical directory 1995-96.

Published by MIS 2000, 7 Castlefield Grove, Knocklyon, Dublin 16

Information pack for unmarried parents.

Available from Treoir (Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children), 36 Upper Rathmines Rd, Dublin 6. Tel: (01) 4964155