



**Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,**  
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,  
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,  
Àras Phlásóg na Rós, Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile,  
Páirc Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta,  
Caladh an Treoigh,  
Luimneach.

**Office of the Assistant National Director,**  
National Disability Team,  
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National Technology Park,  
Castletroy,  
Limerick.

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

Deputy Jim O'Callaghan,  
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Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 39877/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of investing €2 million annually in the augmentative and alternative communication programme.*

## **HSE Response**

### **Augmentative and Alternative Communication Support Programme**

Assistive Technology, when used appropriately, has the potential to support people with disabilities to exercise their human rights and become more active members of society.

Assistive technologies are increasingly being used by people with disabilities to enable them to have more choice and control and live 'ordinary lives in ordinary places'

AsIAM (Autism Spectrum Information, Advice and Meeting Point CLG) is an organisation which supports people on the Autism Spectrum by providing information, advice and an online meeting point.

The HSE is providing funding to this organisation for its Augmentative and Alternative Communication Support Programme. This is open to applications from Autistic children or adults who may benefit from a high-tech AAC device and associated support. The programme also aims to support the family and professionals supporting users to advance their knowledge and confidence in AAC.

The AAC support programme will run two separate referral processes as follows:



1. For Autistic children and families attending a speech and language therapist who will support the individual with device trial and set up.
2. For families/children not yet linked in with speech and language therapist.

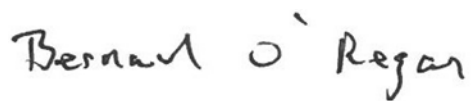
The programme will:

- Support children's total communication by providing information and training to key stakeholders in the child's life, e.g., parents/carers and school staff on how to choose an appropriate AAC app through an AAC trial, introduce and model use of AAC.

By providing individuals a communication device best suited to their individual needs that they can use with guidance from a Speech and Language Therapist to support their communication

With regard to the question asked, the estimated full-year cost to the Exchequer of investing €2 million annually in the augmentative and alternative communication programme, this would be €2 million per annum.

Yours Sincerely,



**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**National Disability Team**

