



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

The Nursing Home Resident Environment Enhancement Scheme (REE Scheme)

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Introduction

The Nursing Home Resident Environment Enhancement (REE) Scheme is introduced to enhance the daily lived experience of nursing home residents.

Under the REE Scheme, enhancements to residents' bedrooms and bathrooms, personal spaces, and communal areas are designed to support residents' dignity, safety, independence, privacy, social engagement, and overall wellbeing.

The REE Scheme will provide funding targeted at structural/other works carried out to specifically enhance the resident environment, safety and facilities in nursing homes in compliance with Regulation 17 (Premises) of S.I. No. 415/2013 - Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 (as amended) as it applies to internal and external communal spaces for residents, their bedrooms/bathrooms, and equipment, furniture and furnishings for use by residents.

This Scheme does not cover equipment, facilities, furniture and furnishings required by employees of the nursing home or works relating to reception areas/foyers.

The closing date for applications will be 20 November 2026. Nursing Homes may claim for structural/safety/other works carried out this year between 1 January and 20 November 2026 and also for works previously undertaken during 2025, between 1 January and 31 December 2025, subject to fulfilling the application criteria. All works funded through this scheme must relate to improving compliance with Regulation 17 (Premises) as it applies to internal and external communal spaces for residents, their bedrooms/bathrooms, and equipment, furniture and furnishings for use by residents.

The Department of Health will be responsible for all policy matters in relation to the scheme and will provide oversight of the scheme. The Department of Health will report to the Minister of State with special responsibility for Older People and Housing on the operation and progress of the scheme.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) will administer the scheme, the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) will administer the application process and provide support and advice to the HSE, and the HSE will make payments where appropriate under this scheme.

The scheme details will be published on a dedicated section of the HSE and NTPF websites.

Interpretation

In these scheme details the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- **Allowable Costs** are costs that may be included in an application for support under the scheme. These costs are those that have been incurred by the nursing home during the period 1 January 2025 to 20 November 2026 to address areas of compliance to meet their obligations under Regulation 17 as it applies to internal and external communal spaces for residents, their bedrooms/bathrooms, and equipment, furniture and furnishings for use by residents (excluding foyers and reception areas), as set out in the Permitted Works section below.
- The **Total Maximum** of costs that can be claimed by an individual nursing home under this scheme is €25,000 during the Period.
- The **Period** is from 1 January 2025 to 20 November 2026.
- **Regulation 17** refers to Regulation 17 (Premises) of S.I. No. 415/2013 - the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 (as amended).
- **Appropriate Professional Oversight** is used in the context of meeting compliance with Regulation 17.
 - The design and construction of buildings is regulated under the Building Control Acts 1990 – 2014 which provide for the making of Building Regulations and Building Control Regulations. The Building Regulations provide for health, safety, welfare and accessibility of people in and around sustainable buildings. The Building Control Regulations require owners, builders and registered construction professionals (Architects/Chartered Engineers etc) to demonstrate that the works or

building have been designed and constructed in compliance with Building Regulations.¹

- All new buildings and existing buildings which undergo an extension, a material alteration or a material change of use must be designed and constructed in compliance with Building Regulations.
- Certificates of Compliance on Completion must be obtained.
- **Permitted Works** to internal and external communal spaces for residents, their bedrooms, and equipment, furniture and furnishings for use by residents, (excluding foyers and reception areas), include and are limited to:
 1. Works to ensure that the premises are—
 - (a) designed and laid out to meet the needs of residents,
 - (b) of sound construction and kept in a good state of repair externally and internally, and
 - (c) clean and suitably decorated.
 2. Works to ensure equipment for use by residents is in good working order.
 3. Works to provide or upgrade:
 - (a) emergency call facilities accessible from each resident's bed and in every room used by residents,
 - (b) grabrails in bath, shower and toilet areas,
 - (c) handrails on both sides of staircases except where there is a stairlift,
 - (d) where residents are maintained on two, or more floors, a lift,
 - (e) safe floor covering (as it applies in residents' bedrooms/ bathrooms/communal spaces),
 - (f) adequate private and communal accommodation for residents,
 - (g) rooms of a suitable size and layout for the needs of residents,

¹ [gov - Building Regulations \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

- (h) adequate space and suitable storage facilities, in so far as is reasonably practicable, for personal possessions, including a lockable storage space and a secure facility for the safe-keeping of residents' personal money and valuables,
 - (i) adequate sitting, recreational and dining space other than a resident's private accommodation,
 - (j) communal space for residents suitable for social, cultural and religious activities appropriate to the circumstances of residents,
 - (k) suitable storage in the designated centre (for residents' use),
 - (l) suitable adaptations, and such support, equipment and facilities (including furniture and furnishings) as may be required to be provided for residents' safety/use,
 - (m) external grounds which are suitable for, and safe for use by, residents and that such grounds are appropriately maintained,
 - (n) ventilation, heating and lighting suitable for residents in all parts of the designated centre which are used by residents.
4. Works to ensure or upgrade, having regard to the number of residents,
- (a) a sufficient supply of piped hot and cold water, which incorporates thermostatic control valves or other suitable anti-scalding protection, and that wash-hand basins are provided in each bedroom,
 - (b) a sufficient number of toilets, and of wash-basins, baths and showers (including assisted baths and showers, having regard to the dependency of persons in the designated centre) fitted with a hot and cold water supply, which incorporates thermostatic control valves or other suitable anti-scalding protection,
 - (c) a sufficient number of toilets designed to provide access for residents in wheelchairs, having regard to the number of persons using wheelchairs in the designated centre,
 - (d) a sufficient number of commodes.

Scope

All applications are welcome from registered nursing home providers under the Nursing Home Resident Environment Enhancement Scheme. In order to make an application, the registered provider applicant must be a nursing home as defined under section 2 of the Health (Nursing Homes) Act 1990.

This vouched scheme is open to all operational voluntary and private nursing homes registered with the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) as of 1 January 2026, and in receipt of payment under the National Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS) for the provision of long-term residential care services.

Such centres owned and/or operated by the Health Service Executive and such centres which have entered into an arrangement with the HSE under section 38 of the Health Act 2004 are not eligible for this Nursing Home Resident Environment Enhancement Scheme

The scheme is not open to nursing homes in receipt of either a Notice of Proposal to Cancel the Registration of a Designated Centre, or a Notice of Refusal to Renew the Registration of a Designated Centre from the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services (the Chief Inspector). Where the Notice of Proposal to Cancel the Registration of a Designated Centre, or the Notice of Refusal to Renew the Registration of a Designated Centre has been withdrawn then the registered provider may apply for the scheme.

Scheme Details

A registered provider applicant may make an application for assistance by submitting the relevant application form in respect of each individual nursing home to the NTPF to claim for vouched allowable costs incurred during the Period. If the registered provider of a nursing home is making multiple claims, these claims should be submitted in no more than two applications where possible. All registered providers of nursing homes participating in the REE Scheme must consent to the sharing of information in respect of their claims with the Department of Health and other Government agencies for the purpose of scheme reporting.

Applications received after the closing date of the 20 November 2026 will not be accepted, will be deemed ineligible and will not be processed by the NTPF or the HSE.

The NTPF will review the application and the supporting documentation.

On a quarterly basis, the HSE will pay the nursing home any amount that it considers to be Allowable Costs.

A nursing home will not be paid more than the Total Maximum during the Period.

Other Government Schemes

Costs will not be allowable under this scheme where the nursing home has previously been reimbursed for those same costs under another Government support scheme in respect of the same Period. All registered providers of nursing homes participating in the REE Scheme must consent to sharing of information in respect of their claims with other Government agencies for the purpose of compliance activity.

Procedure

- i All registered providers of nursing homes who wish to participate in the scheme must sign and complete the relevant application form.
- ii An application may be made in respect of the Period. The application form can be downloaded from the HSE or NTPF websites and must be signed by an authorised person on behalf of the nursing home and sent, with all supporting documentation, to the dedicated NTPF email address REE@NTPF.ie
- iii All registered providers of nursing homes must provide the following with every application:
 - a) For retrospective works carried out between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025, a valid invoice from the contractor who carried out the works which should contain the following information: payee's information, amount due, payment due date, invoice date, invoice number, tax reference number and a description of the goods or services purchased.
 - b) For works to be completed or goods or services purchased between 1 January 2026 and 20 November 2026, a valid invoice from the contractor who carried out the works which should contain the following information: payee's information, amount due, payment due date, invoice date, invoice number, tax reference number and a description of the goods or services purchased itemised under the permitted works categories.
 - c) A self-declaration that all information provided is correct and accurate which can be provided by way of tick-box on the application form.

- d) Consent to the HSE, NTPF, HIQA, Department of Health sharing information in relation to their application for verification, assessment or reporting purposes.
- e) Evidence of the applicant's tax compliance on the date of payment.
- iv The NTPF will verify and validate every claim in accordance with the scheme rules and advise on the appropriate amount to be paid to each nursing home by the HSE.
- v Retrospective audits of claims may be carried out on a sample and/or risk basis, supported by professional auditors. It will be necessary for the registered provider of the nursing home to be able to provide vouched evidence of expenditure in relation to Allowable Costs. Any expenditure that is not vouched will be repayable on demand, or otherwise recoverable as a contract debt. All records shall be kept by the registered providers of the nursing homes for a minimum period of 6 years.
- vi The HSE will process the scheme payments in a similar manner but separately to the normal monthly NHSS payment to the nursing home's bank account.
- vii The NTPF, HSE, or its agents may at any time review and verify any claims made under the scheme. The outcome of any such exercise may result in a change in any advice given by the NTPF hereunder, or a change in payments made or amounts due.
- viii A registered provider of a nursing home may not, in respect of a particular period, claim assistance under the scheme and another Government scheme for which they are eligible to receive assistance to carry out Permitted Works. If any registered provider of a nursing home is paid assistance under the scheme and another scheme in respect of the same costs in the same period, then the amount paid under the scheme must be repaid immediately, in default of which any sums paid under the scheme may be recovered at the absolute discretion of the HSE, as a simple contract debt.

- ix All works claimed for and carried out under this scheme may be subject to inspection as required by the NTPF or HSE and this may involve the sharing of information on individual nursing homes between these organisations for verification processes and assessment of applications.

Process

- i. The NTPF will confirm receipt of the completed application form.
- ii. The NTPF will verify that the application form has been completed correctly.
- iii. The HSE will pay a maximum of €25,000 to a nursing home under the scheme in respect of their total claim(s).
- iv. The HSE will validate and process the payments in accordance with the HSE's own payment control procedures.
- v. The above process will be repeated for every application.
- vi. The HSE will publish details of all payments made to nursing homes under the scheme.
- vii. The HSE and NTPF will provide the Department of Health with information in relation to administration of the scheme including an itemised list of all capital/structural/safety/other improvements implemented using the scheme, the total amounts allowed in respect of each Regulation, and the total amount allowed at nursing home level, the numbers of applications incomplete, the numbers of applications approved/declined, the number and value of payments made.
- viii. The scheme details in relation to its operation and uptake will be reported on by both the NTPF and the HSE as required by the Department of Health and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.
- ix. Following the receipt of sufficient data from the sector, the NTPF will review the cost data and may advise the Department of Health on any aspect of the scheme. The Department may require amendments to the scheme as deemed appropriate.

Noting the significant pressure facing the sector and health system, it will be important to balance control, oversight and administrative burden in relation to this scheme.