



OIFIG AN ARD-RUNAÍ, AN RIONN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Ms Niamh Maguire  
Committee Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2



Dear Ms Maguire,

Your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in relation to my recent appearance at a meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts refers.

I have examined the issue as outlined in your letter, in the context of my review of the day's proceedings.

The audit report in respect of the Charitable Lotteries fund payments to Rehab, and as supplied to the Committee of Public Accounts previously, mentions hospitality costs in the context of an Advocacy and Promotions spend by Rehab of €697,000. I have since had the background papers to the audit report examined and they do not provide any further detail in relation to hospitality expenditure. The documents refer to the breakdown between pay and non-pay cost as outlined below.

<u>Advocacy and Promotions</u>	
Payroll	€ 453,000
Non payroll costs	€ 244,000
Total	€ 697,000

Audit details in relation to Advocacy and Promotions expenditure as contained in the Internal Audit Report are reproduced below. Management explanations as provided by Rehab at the time of the audit are also shown *in italics* below.

**Rehab Advocacy and Promotions expenditure – as contained in Internal Audit Report:**

Advocacy and Promotions expenditure of €697k included payroll costs of €453k. The audit viewed a total of 2 invoices worth €27k (11% of non pay expenditure). All were processed and authorised correctly.

The 5 major advocacy costs were as detailed below;

	Description	Expenditure 2011	Money used for:
1	Professional Fees	23,655	Rehab News magazine
2	Professional Fees	13,609	Rehab Annual Report
3	Vehicle lease costs <i>Cuirfear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge</i>	12,529	Staff vehicles



4	Advertising	11,890	Kantar Media
5	Professional Subscriptions	8,493	Public Relations memberships

**Management explanations by Rehab as to the use of the Lotteries Charitable Fund for Advocacy and Promotions at the time of audit:**

*The Rehab Group advocacy, diversity, communications/marketing and public affairs team support all of the Rehab Group divisions in the areas of advocacy, client engagement, communications, public affairs, and marketing. It also has responsibility for coordinating certain Rehab Group activities such as the Rehab Group Innovation Awards, conferences, special projects, etc.*

**Advocacy & public affairs**

*Part of the Rehab Group's mission is to strive for improvements in the factors impacting on the lives of people with disabilities and others who are marginalised. Rehab Group interacts with government agencies and bodies, international organisations and other relevant parties on issues of relevance to this.*

*The department regularly prepares submissions for the Rehab Group on issues of importance. These have included feedback to: the Department of Health in respect of its Review of Disability Policy; the consultation on the implementation of SOLAS; the consultation on the Equality Authority's Strategic Plan; the Neurological Alliance of Ireland's response to the National Rehabilitation Strategy; the Department of Education in relation to the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector; the Steering Group on the Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland; the Department of Health on the Review of the Mental Health Act 2001; the Department of Health on the Review of the Disability Act 2005.*

*The Rehab Group has also actively participated in reviews in relation to schemes which are relevant to people with disabilities such as the Disability Allowance, the Wage Subsidy Scheme and supports for carers.*

*The Rehab Group also contributes to international developments in relation to disability and human rights and has consultative status as a non-Governmental organisation at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It contributed to the Irish Government's preparation of its report under the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations as well as submitting an independent shadow report, similarly with the International Conventions on Cultural and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.*

**Client Advocacy and Engagement**

*The department undertakes the management of client advocacy and engagement services within Rehab Group. This includes the client representative bodies the National Representative Council (NRC) in National Learning Network and the National RehabCare Advocacy Council (NRAC), which work at local level with management to ensure that services are run with client involvement, and at regional and national level, to ensure that clients have a voice in the running of the organisations supporting them.*

*In the case of harder to reach clients, the team supports those involved in service delivery by devising and implementing plans to communicate with clients, garner feedback and ensure involvement in service direction.*



*Under the Partners in Policy making programme, parents of children and adults with a disability and persons with a disability themselves are supported to become partners in policy formation with the supports they interact with. This is an advocacy development and policy awareness training course.*

*The citizenship awareness programme is run partly as a train the trainer course with staff delivering services directly to clients and partly directly with the services. Its purpose is to inform clients of their democratic rights and ensure that any obstacles to their participation in democracy are removed.*

### ***Diversity Work***

*Often, changes in the world around them can be confusing to people with disabilities. As the population of Ireland has changed and become less monocultural, a need has arisen for people who use the services of the Rehab Group to have access to supports to understand these changes. The delivery of a diversity awareness programme, development of a policy and ongoing activity in this area coordinated by the Department supports this activity.*

### ***Innovation***

*The Department runs the innovation awards, which encourage the development of new ideas and the promotion of client involvement in the development of new services and new ways of doing things within the organisation.*

### ***Communications and Marketing***

*The team supports the services of the organisation to promote the work that it does, both in its local communities and nationally. It is essential that people with disability and others who require the services Rehab provides are able to access them in a timely fashion.*

*Publicising the work of Rehab and the achievements of clients has two purposes – one, to demonstrate the support the organisation provides to people and the outcomes they achieve, so that the general public is aware of the possibilities and the services Rehab provides should they need them; and two, to portray positive messages about people with a disability in the media. This in turn has an impact on public perception of people with a disability, and on the treatment of people with disabilities in society in relation to inclusion.*

Please let me know if you need anything further.

Yours sincerely



Brian Purcell  
Secretary General  
Department of Justice and Equality

/ / March 2014