



Unit 7A, The Dargan Building  
Heuston South Quarter  
Military Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8.  
076 695 9983

Deputy Gerry Adams  
Leinster House  
Dublin 1.

**PQ ref 18126/18\*\* To ask the Minister for Health if the routine screening of children with Down syndrome for arthritis has been considered**

Dear Deputy Adams

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Current best practice would be for Children with Down Syndrome to be assessed medically should they develop symptoms suggestive of inflammatory arthritis. We are not aware of any evidence which demonstrates improved patient outcomes or increased cost effectiveness of screening Children with Down syndrome annually for inflammatory arthritis.

Once inflammatory arthritis is suspected, best practice is for the patient to be assessed and treated by a consultant rheumatologist within 12 weeks.

There is a long waiting time nationally for all adult and paediatric patients with symptoms of inflammatory arthritis to see a consultant rheumatologist due to a shortage of consultant rheumatologists in Ireland.

The National Clinical Programme for Rheumatology has prepared a model of care and implementation plan to increase the number of adult and paediatric rheumatologists nationally in order to achieve access for all patients with inflammatory arthritis within 12 weeks."

Yours sincerely,

**Kilian McGrane**  
**National Programme Director, National Women and Infant's Health Programme**