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26<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

Aindrias Moynihan T.D.,  
Dáil Eireann  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 12403/19**

**"To ask the Minister for Health his plans to reduce the waiting times for persons waiting for ophthalmology services in the County Cork area; and if he will make a statement on the matter."**

Dear Deputy Moynihan

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.

Waiting lists for ophthalmology services in Cork County are under monthly review. Within current resources a number of steps have been put in place to reduce the waiting lists e.g. waiting list validation exercise, recruitment of an additional Orthoptist in Cork city as well as some additional Community Ophthalmic Physician sessions. Triage and Prioritisation processes have also been put in place so the current and additional resources can target those of highest priority. All highest priority children are currently being assessed and treated within a 3-4 month period.

While the Primary Care Eye Service review group report has been published, no additional resources have been made available to implement the recommendations of that report. A group is currently reviewing the recommendations with the aim of implementing what is practicable and to assist in reducing the waiting list. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare sought additional resources under the 2019 service planning process to address all priority categories on the waiting list. To date the CHO has not received any additional funding in its core budget. However, some time-related savings in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare Primary Care spend has allowed for the temporary recruitment of an additional post for the department. Once this post holder commences the processes in place will be reviewed to ensure optimum efficiencies are obtained.

Availability of suitably qualified staff for this service remains an issue but efforts are continuously made to forge links with graduates, colleges, etc., to promote any vacancies.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Teresa O' Donovan**  
**Head of Service - Primary Care,**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**