



Children's Health Ireland

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann (SLÉ), Herberton, Siúlán San Séamas, Rialto, D08 HP97, Éire
Children's Health Ireland (CHI), Herberton, St James's Walk, Rialto, D08 HP97, Ireland

9th December 2020

Deputy Donnchadh O'Laoghaire,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 40527/20

"To ask the Minister for Health the status of the provision of paediatric rheumatology services in Ireland; when a third paediatric rheumatologist will commence their position; and the steps he is taking to lessen the significant waiting list which is currently three years long".

Dear Deputy O'Laoghaire,

I refer to your parliamentary question above to which I have been asked to provide a response.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) sincerely regrets that children and their families are experiencing long waiting times for their Rheumatology and MRI appointments. We recognize that too many children are waiting too long for their appointments and we are making every effort to reduce these waiting times.

During the initial phases of COVID-19, all face to face hospital outpatient reviews and most of the planned diagnostic tests, including MRI, were deferred in response to the pandemic. CHI at Crumlin has recommenced the vast majority of outpatient and diagnostic services albeit at reduced numbers due to public health guidelines on social distancing. Currently, Consultant Rheumatologists are seeing a number of patients back in the outpatient suite to include urgent patients and those who were deferred during the early phases of COVID-19. There is a significant waiting list at present due to the volume of referrals received by the Rheumatology Department on a year to year basis and for reasons detailed above relating to COVID-19.

There is an active recruitment campaign for an additional Rheumatology Consultant underway closing on December 11 2020 following an earlier campaign in 2020 that did not result in the recruitment of the third Consultant Rheumatologist. It is anticipated that a suitable candidate can be recruited into this role as part of the wider Rheumatology Team.

This addition to the Medical staff will allow for an increased number of patients to be seen, diagnosed and treatment initiated as part of the comprehensive Rheumatology Service.

CHI is also working closely with our colleagues in the HSE and Department of Health to secure funding for additional MRI services that are needed to serve patients from many specialties including rheumatology.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Gannon
Chief Operations Officer
Children's Health Ireland

Email: joe.gannon@chi.ie

Mission – To promote and provide child-centered, research-led and learning informed healthcare, to the highest standards of safety and excellence. We do this in partnership with each other, with children, young people and their families through a network of children's services in Ireland.

CRA Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20202295 Revenue Charitable Status CHY: 22235

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