



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

8th December 2020

Deputy Seán Crowe,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 40976/20

“To ask the Minister for Health when he expects the third national paediatric rheumatologist position currently open for applications to be filled; if children with Down's syndrome face a four-year waiting list to be assessed for arthritis; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that parents of children with Down's syndrome were promised a reduction in this referral time to three months under the previous Government; his plans to increase the number of paediatric rheumatologists further; the status of the planned information campaign for general practitioners and other healthcare professionals on Down's syndrome-related arthritis; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Smyth,

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

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) confirm there is an active recruitment campaign for an additional Rheumatology Consultant underway closing on December 11th 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.

Regarding the information campaign, CHI advise a meeting was held with the Rheumatology Team and hospital representatives along with a number of advocacy groups in December 2019 to include Down Syndrome Ireland, Arthritis Ireland and the Irish Children's Arthritis Network. With respect to the Information leaflet, CHI would like to apologise for the delay with this. The leaflet has gone through a number of iterations and has been compiled with the assistance of UCD and is going through the final phase of graphic design and branding. It is the intention of CHI to publish this information leaflet shortly once the final version has been agreed.

CHI has been engaging with the HSE/Department of Health is trying to secure funding for an additional MRI scanner and staff that are required to meet the need of our current patients and those who require a MRI scan in the future. This has also been raised with the Minister of Health during a recent visit to CHI.

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

Board Members: Prof James Browne (Chairman), Prof Niamh Brennan, Mr Con Cronin, Ms Mary Cryan, Mr Liam Dowdall, Prof Martin Elliott, Ms Catherine Guy, Dr Anne Kilgallen, Dr Gavin Lavery, Ms Brigid McManus, Mr Turlough O'Sullivan, Mr Sean Sheehan



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CHI apologise that these children are experiencing a delay in accessing consultations and MRI services in the hospital due to challenges with the volume of referrals to the Rheumatology service, as detailed above, and with COVID-19 restrictions.

CHI is 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
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