



Oifig an Straitéis Chúraim Phríomha agus an Phleanála  
Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta  
HSE, Urlár 2, Páirc Ghnó Samhail, Model Farm Road, Corcaigh  
Tel: 021-4928512 R: [primarycare.strategy@hse.ie](mailto:primarycare.strategy@hse.ie)

Office of the Assistant National Director Primary Care  
Strategy and Planning  
HSE, Floor 2, Model Business Park, Model Farm Road, Cork  
Tel: 021-4928512 Email: [primarycare.strategy@hse.ie](mailto:primarycare.strategy@hse.ie)

28<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Deputy Carol Nolan, T.D.,  
Dail Eireann,  
Kildare St.,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Nolan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your Parliamentary Questions below which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

**PQ Number: 4531/20** To ask the Minister for Health if a target for eye care patients based on the urgency of the condition will be introduced alongside referral to treatment targets to prevent avoidable blindness; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Carol Nolan

### Response

The Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) provides adult medical card holders with one eye examination for glasses with an ophthalmologist or optometrist free of charge every two years plus the cost covered for a certain range of glasses, if required. As per the Primary Care Eye Services Review Group Report (2017), the COSS requires amending to allow children over the age of 8 years (and some children aged under 8 years) to be discharged to their local optometrist for biennial review and provision of glasses and to allow for the provision of checks for certain adult patients with glaucoma, cataract and dry AMD. A wider range of lenses, spectacles, filters etc. may be included under the amended COSS. Preparatory work is underway in relation to amending the COSS and further engagement will take place with the Department of Health.

The provision of vision aids/special devices is managed on an individual basis by the relevant local Health Office. The Primary Care Eye Services Review Group Report (2017) recommends that the list of aids/devices and the approval process is standardised nationally. A National Clinical Advisory Group will then be established to quality assure the COSS and the provision of aids/devices.

Referrals to community eye care services are triaged with urgent referral being prioritised. Within the hospital setting, significant work has been done to develop referral targets for inpatient & outpatient referrals across a number of specialties including ophthalmology. Referrals are now being categorised as urgent (<28 days) semi urgent (<13 weeks) non urgent (<9 months) .



Oifig an Straitéis Chúraim Phríomha agus an Phleanála  
Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta  
HSE, Urlár 2, Páirc Ghnó Samhail, Model Farm Road, Corcaigh  
Tel: 021-4928512 R: [primarycare.strategy@hse.ie](mailto:primarycare.strategy@hse.ie)

Office of the Assistant National Director Primary Care  
Strategy and Planning  
HSE, Floor 2, Model Business Park, Model Farm Road, Cork  
Tel: 021-4928512 Email: [primarycare.strategy@hse.ie](mailto:primarycare.strategy@hse.ie)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', written over a horizontal line.

---

**Geraldine Crowley,  
Assistant National Director,  
Primary Care Strategy and Planning**