



21st May 2020

Deputy Sean Fleming,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 5231/20 - To ask the Minister for Health his plans to introduce a national children's eye care programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Sean Fleming

Dear Deputy Fleming,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

Best Health for Children the Childhood surveillance and screening commences at birth and involves nine assessments/checks until a child is 12 years of age. Data is collated on a child's development, including visual behaviour and visual acuity. There are eight child vision checks in the Best Health for Children Programme.

Children who fail the vision screening checks are referred into the primary care services for further investigation.

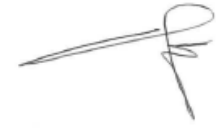
The Primary Eye Care Services Review (2018) identified that the primary-care based eye service, which initially grew as a means of treating and managing children who fail school screening as stipulated by the Health Act, 1970,33 has not developed adequately to meet the changing needs of patients in the community.

Working with the National Clinical programme for Ophthalmology a new model of care was developed to address the challenges in the existing service and to adapt eye care to address future need in line with the SlainteCare objectives to reconfigure services to be provided from a primary care setting. This principle has particular relevance to eye care services where a significant number of patients could have their specialist care delivered in the primary care setting with appropriately resourced services.

Integrated eye care teams with Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist working alongside Optometrists, Orthoptists and Nurses are being established to deliver the reconfigured service.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



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Siobhán McArdle,
Head of Operations Primary Care,
Community Operations