



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

1st December 2020

Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan
Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham

PQ 14366/20* To ask the Minister for Health the scoliosis treatment waiting lists and wait times compared with the same period in 2018 and 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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.

Response:

The management of scoliosis is complex and is determined by the severity of the curvature and skeletal maturity which together help predict the likelihood of progression. There are a number of treatment options for scoliosis related to the underlying condition of each patient and their growth pattern, skeletal maturity and other factors.

The HSE National Service Plan 2019 set out actions to build on the improvements in access to paediatric orthopaedics, including surgery for scoliosis to ensure clinically appropriate waiting times. Funding was provided to Cappagh Orthopaedic Hospital and Children's Health Ireland to ensure that children / young adults have their scoliosis surgery undertaken in the most appropriate setting, based on clinical need and within a clinically appropriate timeframe. It also provided additional funding to continue the implementation of the care pathway for the transition of adolescents with scoliosis from Children's Health Ireland to the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital.

In 2020, there has been a significant reduction in all scheduled activity across all Acute Hospital Services including surgical procedures this is in line with the National Action Plan on COVID-19 (page 20). <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/47b727-government-publishes-national-action-plan-on-covid-19/> . Time-critical essential treatments continued throughout this period however, significant volumes of planned elective activity was postponed. The

reduction in activity was to ensure patient safety, and that all appropriate resources, both infrastructural and human, are made available for COVID-19 related activity.

Arising from the NPHE decision in early May regarding resumption of services, guidance was developed in the context of scheduled care for the resumption of services. Services have resumed in line with this guidance, which outlines the measures that need to be undertaken to ensure safety for both patients and staff. While there has been a significant recovery in terms of service delivery, these measures continue to have an impact on the volume of activity delivered.

The information below outlines the details for adults and children on waiting lists for 2018, 2019 and 2020, this includes patients who are waiting on spinal fusions or other spinal related surgeries including, posterior spinal fusions, anterior spinal fusions, posterior and anterior fusions, application of halo brace and application of body cast. This information includes all forms of scoliosis degenerative, congenital etc.

Table a. Total numbers of patients waiting as of October 2018, 2019 and 2020

Hospital Group	2018	2019	2020
Childrens Health Ireland (including Cappagh pathway)	162	195	202
SAOLTA Hospital Group*	7	6	0
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	33	38	26
Ireland East Hospital Group**	117	66	43
National Total	319	305	271
<p>*During 2019 and 2020 paediatric patients awaiting scoliosis surgery were transferred from SAOLTA Hospital Group to CHI or the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital as part of the development of the service.</p> <p>** There is a difficulty segregating the scoliosis patients from other patients with spinal conditions as Surgery would be blended in this regard. Breakdown represents waiting lists for Spinal Surgeons the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital</p>			

Table b. Current number of patients waiting by Hospital Group and time band as of October 2020

Hospital Group	0-3 Months	3-6 Months	6-9 Months	9-12 Months	12-15 Months	15-18 Months	18+ Months
Childrens Health Ireland	77	34	25	20	16	7	23
SAOLTA Hospital Group*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	2	2	3	4	5	1	9
Ireland East Hospital Group**	10	5	4	3	6	2	13
<p>*During 2019 and 2020 paediatric patients awaiting scoliosis surgery were transferred from SAOLTA Hospital Group to CHI or the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital as part of the development of the service.</p> <p>** There is a difficulty segregating the scoliosis patients from other patients with spinal conditions as Surgery would be blended in this regard. Breakdown represents waiting lists for Spinal Surgeons the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital</p>							

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Kidd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "K".

Robert Kidd
Assistant National Director, Acute Operations