

10th March, 2021

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Pádraig O'Sullivan, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 10623/21

"To ask the Minister for Health the steps being taken to reduce waiting times for primary care ophthalmology appointments in the north Lee local health area; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy O' Sullivan,

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.

In Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH), children's ophthalmology services for Cork city (North and South Lee) are provided via the Primary Care Ophthalmology Team based in St Mary's Campus, Gurrabraher. The waiting list is managed on a clinical basis and appointments are offered on priority of need.

You will be aware that from Mid-March 2020 arising from the COVID 19 pandemic, health services were disrupted and the number of appointments issued for our ophthalmic clinics has been severely curtailed. However, the waiting list is regularly reviewed, telephone consultations have taken place where appropriate and all referrals are clinically triaged and ready for appointment as soon as services can safely resume. CKCH is currently looking at ways to address some of the backlog including the feasibility of providing an out of hours service for a short period of time once services resume.

The availability of suitably qualified staff for the ophthalmic service has in the past, and continues to be, challenging. The lack of such staff compromises not only the level of service which can be provided, but also the way in which the services is provided. CKCH is making every effort to recruit for vacancies by advertising widely and contacting the appropriate colleges.

CKCH is currently finalising draft plans to implement elements of the national Primary Care Eye Services Review Report at local level and this will also have an impact on reducing the current waiting list.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Majella Daly
Interim Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare