

**22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021**

Deputy John Lahart,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 3064/21**

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of spinal fusion patients currently waiting less than 4, 4 to 8 and more than 8 months, respectively in Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin and Temple Street Children's University Hospital at the end of December 2020 or the latest date available; and if he will provide the same information for other spinal patients".

Dear Deputy Lahart,

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

CHI sincerely regret that children and their families are experiencing long waiting times for their appointments. While the majority of children seen within a 12-month period, we recognise that too many are waiting too long for their appointments and we are making every effort to reducing these waiting times.

The introduction of government restrictions for COVID-19 based on public health advice has required CHI at Crumlin and Temple Street to defer all non-emergency spinal operations. CHI are now planning to phase up services on an incremental basis subject to public health and HSE advice.

In 2019, 189 spinal fusion procedures were performed in the full year and there have been 163 spinal surgical procedures carried out in 2020. As a comparator with the same period last year, and given COVID-19 disruptions to scheduled care services, there have been 26 fewer spinal fusions carried out, 189 versus 163.

As of the 31 December 2020, CHI at Crumlin completed 109 spinal fusions.

For the period January 2020 to 31 December 2020, 22 fusions were performed in CHI at Temple Street and 32 performed in Cappagh.



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

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) continue to actively monitor scoliosis-waiting times for surgery and proactively continue to work with the HSE to reduce waiting times for patients attending the service. As part of the 2021 estimates process CHI has submitted proposals to the HSE for a number of initiatives which include the potential for further patients to be transferred to Cappagh for non-complex elective surgeries and outsourcing spinal patients to private providers.

Attached is a copy of the update on scoliosis related surgeries at 31 December 2020.

Yours sincerely,

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**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

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