



Children's Health Ireland

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

7th April 2021

Deputy Réada Cronin,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 15795/21**

"To ask the Minister for Health when the paediatric rheumatologist will start work and see patients; when the information leaflet prepared for general practitioners by parents of children with Down syndrome-related arthritis and which has been ready since November 2019 will be distributed to their practices and to other health professionals; when arthritis screening for children with Down syndrome will be introduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Cronin,

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

The Rheumatology service in Crumlin announce that they have appointed a third Consultant Rheumatologist position following a successful recruitment campaign. It is envisioned that the Consultant will take up their post in 2022 following their current commitments and obligations.

With respect to the information leaflet, CHI at Crumlin has recently published, in conjunction with the Consultant Rheumatology Team, a patient/parent information leaflet for Down Syndrome Arthritis. The link is as follows,  
<https://www.olchc.ie/Children-Family/Parent-Patient-Information-leaflets/Down-Syndrome-Associated-Arthritis-DA.pdf>

Patients with Down Syndrome who present to rheumatology services with suspicion of arthritis are clinically assessed and diagnosed by the clinical team, with a cohort of these patients requiring an MRI scan based on the individualised clinical examination and recommendation. Any referral for MRI assessment is made on a clinical case by case basis by the Rheumatology Team and is done for diagnostic rather than screening purposes.

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

Board Members: Prof James Browne (Chairman), Prof Niamh Brennan, Mr Con Cronin, Ms Mary Cryan, Mr Liam Dowdall, Prof Martin Elliott, Ms Catherine Guy, Dr Anne Kilgallen, Dr Gavin Lavery, Ms Brigid McManus, Mr Turlough O'Sullivan, Mr Sean Sheehan



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CHI Crumlin apologise that these children are experiencing a delay in accessing Rheumatology and MRI services due to challenges with the volume of referrals to the service and with COVID-19 restrictions.

CHI is working closely with our colleagues in the HSE and Department of Health to secure funding for additional MRI services that are needed to serve patients from many specialties including Rheumatology. This, coupled with the appointment of the third Consultant will allow for an increased number of patients to be seen, diagnosed and treatment initiated as part of the comprehensive Rheumatology service.

Yours sincerely,

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**Joe Gannon**  
**Chief Operations Officer**  
**Children's Health Ireland**  
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