



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Health Service Executive,  
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29<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

**Deputy Charlie Flanagan T.D.,  
Dail Eireann  
Dublin**

**Ref: PQ 16337/21 – To ask the Minister for Health the circumstances surrounding the relocation of the children’s eye clinic from Portlaoise to Athlone: if comprehensive details will be provided of when this service will resume in Co. Laois: and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Flanagan

I refer to the parliamentary question above relating to Ophthalmology services in Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

The Children’s Ophthalmology Service is a key priority for the Midland Regional Hospital at Portlaoise. A number of unsuccessful recruitment initiatives were undertaken to replace Dr. Nolan. In order to address the waiting list, the Hospital working with the Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore agreed for those children waiting to be seen in Tullamore and this initiative was supported by the Ophthalmology Service in MRHT.

Unfortunately with the impact of Covid-19, the facility used by this service in MRHT is not available currently and staff agreed to continue appointments for these children in Athlone. The Hospital appreciate the difficulties for our patients and is working with the National Ophthalmology Programme to recruit appropriate staff to restore the service at MRHP as soon as possible

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely

**Michael Knowles  
General Manager**