



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

29 April 2021

Deputy Alan Kelly,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

**PQ 16769/21**

"To ask the Minister for Health the status of the disability services for children and young persons in relation to children with spina bifida and hydrocephalus on accessing health services within their local area and equity of services received in CHI, Temple Street and CHI, Crumlin; and if he will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Kelly,

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

Currently all newborn babies in Ireland who are diagnosed with spina bifida are transferred to CHI at Temple Street soon after birth for neurosurgery and input from the spina bifida team during their in-patient stay.

After discharge home they are linked with local medical, therapy and nursing services and followed-up with the spina bifida multidisciplinary team (MDT). The spina bifida MDT meeting in CHI Temple Street is held every month with the following clinicians: Physiotherapy, Neuropsychology, Medical Social Work and Clinical Nurse Specialist.

The clinic is based around a child-focused enablement approach to disability. Patients see the clinicians on the same day allowing for a shared and collaborative approach to care.

Ideally children should be seen annually, however, the current waiting times for follow-up appointments is 25 months and the waiting time for a new referral is six months.

New referrals are rare as the majority of children are born into the service. When they do occur they are triaged and accepted or declined following review of the speciality services already available to the child and in discussion with the clinical leads.

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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Surgical services in CHI at Crumlin are delivered in separate surgical clinics. They deliver care to children known there since birth – children born before the Neurosurgical services were established in 2008.

All children in Ireland with Spina Bifida will access the MDT in the new children's hospital when it opens as part of the new paediatric model of healthcare services across Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

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