



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

Our Ref: PQ/25003/21

9 August 2021

Deputy Pearse Doherty TD
Dáil Eireann
Dublin 2

Dear Deputy Doherty

I refer to your recent PQ, copy below, which has been forwarded to me for attention. May I take this opportunity to apologise for the long delay in responding, which was due to the recent cyber attack and for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

PQ

To ask the Minister for Health if children with spina bifida born before 2008 under the care of St. Mary's Children's Hospital, Crumlin have equal access to multidisciplinary services in Temple Street Children's University Hospital as children born in 2009 and after who are under the care of the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Pearse Doherty

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 the input of the Spina Bifida Team during their inpatient stay. After discharge home they are linked with local medical, therapy and nursing services and followed up in the Spina Bifida Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Clinic.

The Spina Bifida MDT Clinic in CHI at Temple Street occurs every month with the following clinicians involved: Neurodisability, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedics, Urology, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, Neuropsychology, Medical Social Worker and Clinical Nurse Specialist. The clinic is based around a child-focused, enablement approach to disability. Patients see the above clinicians on the same day allowing for a shared and collaborative approach to care.

The majority of children <16 years with Spina Bifida attend CHI at Temple Street. There are sufficient patients on CHI at Temple Street caseload to operate more frequent clinics, as is our goal. but this is not possible at this time due to limited resources and this has had an impact on waiting times between appointments.

Ideally, children would be seen annually but the following waiting times currently exist.

- Wait time for follow up appointments is 25 months.
- Wait time for new referrals is 6 months.

New referrals to CHI at Temple Street clinic are rare as the majority of children are born into the service. When they 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.



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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 – born before the Neurosurgical Services were established in 2008.

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

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Your sincerely

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Chief Operations Officer
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