



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

26th November 2021

Deputy David Cullinane,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.

PQ 52227/21* *To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adults with scoliosis who received an outpatient appointment within 12 weeks of referral, a diagnostic scan within 10 days or an outpatient appointment within 10 weeks; the number which did not; the current waiting times for an outpatient, diagnostic or inpatient appointment for scoliosis; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

PQ 52227/21* *To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adults on waiting lists for scoliosis treatment or spinal procedures, including fusion, by location; the median, mean and maximum waiting times; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Response

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The management of scoliosis is complex and is determined by the severity of the curvature and skeletal maturity which together help predict the likelihood of progression. There are a number of treatment options for scoliosis related to the underlying condition of each patient and their growth pattern, skeletal maturity and other factors.

Since 2015 there has been substantial investment in orthopaedics including scoliosis. This investment has led to the development of services for adults and children in specifically in Children's Health Ireland (CHI Crumlin and CHI Temple Street) and in the Ireland East Hospital Group in the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital as the National Spinal Centre and in National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh. The investment has included resources to support service delivery and the development of a new Orthopaedic laminar flow theatre which opened early 2017 in CHI Crumlin. The investment in the the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital supports management of adult Scoliosis patients and assists in service provision of timely surgical intervention to spinal injury patients and resources utilised to ensure additional surgical activity in elective orthopaedic surgery as theatre available and staffed.

Ireland East Hospital Group

National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh

Adult back pain is generally managed via the MSK service for which there is currently no waiting list. There have been 45 patients seen in the Consultant led back referral clinics in 2021 YTD, 2 of whom were seen within 12 weeks, 3 within 10 weeks and the rest over 12 weeks. If an adult requires a Consultant led spinal referral, there is currently a 3-6 month wait for a Consultant led outpatient clinic. National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh do not have specific data relating to scoliosis in terms of outpatients, however, this work is currently being undertaken with the introduction of a new patient administration system which may be able to facilitate this level of information in the future.

Paediatric scoliosis referrals are triaged within 2 weeks of referral and the parent is contacted immediately thereafter to start the process via NOHCs Rapid Access Scoliosis Clinic. There is no waiting list for paediatric scoliosis at present. X-rays are taken on the morning of an outpatient appointment.

The waiting time for inpatient surgery is contingent on a number of factors including, inter alia, educational needs of a child, the curvature of the spine (e.g. surgery may not be justifiable for all), the angle of the curve on the date of the first menstrual period etc. In general, waiting time for surgery is circa 3 to 4 months but pre-operative assessments are conducted within this timeframe.

The median, mean and maximum waiting times for 2020 and 2021 for adults on waiting lists for scoliosis treatment or spinal procedures, including fusion in National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh is outlined below.

2021

Median	16.86	weeks
Mean	21.18	weeks
Max Value	78.14	weeks

2020

Median	20.29	weeks
Mean	23.07	weeks
Max Value	52.14	weeks

Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

All referrals for Adult patients received are assessed and triaged by the spinal surgeon. All referrals deemed urgent are seen within 8 weeks and all referrals deemed routine are seen within 16 weeks. In 2020 a total of 292 patients were seen and in 2021 so far a total of 306 patients have been seen in OPD. Diagnostic imaging is obtained on the day of initial assessment. Where MRI scans are required, obtaining this imaging is not a rate limiting step to progress patient care.

Patient's surgical date is decided upon and set at a mutually convenient time for the patient and clinical teams, and therefore no wait time exists, though currently due to COVID in the hospital clinical judgement is being employed when deciding whether to proceed with surgery based upon a myriad of extrinsic factors.

2021

Median	3	Months
Mean	4	Months
Max Value	6	Months

2020

Median	5	Months
Mean	6	Months
Max Value	10	Months

Note: Surgery is scheduled at a mutually convenient time

Children's Health Ireland

CHI do not routinely capture the data you are seeking on Scoliosis OPD and diagnostic

waiting times. Scoliosis referrals are included in the Orthopaedic Referral pathway and as such are not distinguished on the system from general orthopaedic referrals.

We attempted to run a programme to extract the information you requested from our system (hence the delay in responding to your query), so that we could provide our families via the Advocacy groups and yourself with the information. Unfortunately, due to the complexities of clinical coding we have not managed to produce it yet. We hope to be able to provide this information at a later date.

In the meantime, the waiting times for Orthopaedic Waits which contain Scoliosis patients are below. Please note that in CHI at Temple St we do fast track any identified scoliosis patients on triage to Cappagh where there are shorter waiting time for Scoliosis referrals.

Attended OPD Appt. within 12 weeks of referral			
Year	Temple St	Crumlin	Total
2020	478	1,601	2,079
2021	277	488	765

Current OPD Wait Times (Orthopaedics) - Patients Still Awaiting Appt.			
Time Band	Temple St	Crumlin	Total
0-3 Months	348	470	818
3-6 Months	247	356	603
6-12 Months	356	454	810
12-24 Months	460	326	786

Yours sincerely,



Trish King
General Manager
Acute Operations