



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

15th November 2021

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan,
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 52851/21* To ask the Minister for Health the number and location of hospital theatres throughout the country of a standard capable of facilitating orthopaedic surgery, cardiac surgery and scoliosis procedures; if there are sufficient facilities available to deal with requirements in the months and years ahead; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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.

Response

The HSE does not hold the specific information that you have sought centrally as such we do not have validated data on all aspects of your enquiry however available relevant information relating to your query is outlined below.

An operating theatre (OT) is a self-contained, aseptic room in which sterile and other surgical procedures can be carried out under general or regional anaesthesia; is normally equipped with an operating table, an anaesthetic machine and adjustable illumination and whose size varies depending on the complexity of procedures and the equipment they require, varying from relatively small, such as for day surgery, to larger for complex procedures such as transplantation or open heart surgery.

Operating theatres in Ireland are designed in line with relevant Health Building Notes (HBN) and Health Technical Memoranda (HTM) as published by NHS Estates, United Kingdom in addition to relevant Irish statutory regulations. Key HBN and HTM guidance documents related to theatres design include NBN 26 - Facilities for surgical procedures in acute general hospitals and HTM 03-01 - Specialised ventilation for healthcare buildings incorporating additional guidance related to the provision of ultra clean ventilation systems for orthopaedic theatres. Equipping requirements would vary per theatre depending on use. As such the theatres themselves, can have multiple purposes and can facilitate a range of surgeries depending on the equipment that is available in the theatre.

In terms of Orthopaedics and Scoliosis, 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 particular 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.

In terms of Cardiac Surgery, the National Review of Specialist Cardiac Services commenced in January 2018 under the Chairmanship of Professor Phillip Nolan and a Steering Group was formed from nominations from interested stakeholders representing medical, professional/technical staff, nursing and patient representatives. Progress has been made on the National Review of Specialist Cardiac Services. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted on the progress of the review and the HSE awaits its recommendations in this regard.

In order to respond to your question, the Clinical Programme for Surgery were consulted and they have advised that there are a number of factors that impact delivery of services that are provided in a theatre setting these include access to ICU beds/Access to Surgical Beds/Access to day beds, staffing both in theatre and at ward level and to support pre-assessment and appropriate diagnostic access. As you will appreciate, operating theatres fluctuate in response to changing demand and factors such as refurbishment, infection control measures, staffing shortages and more recently the impact of COVID impact on theatre availability.

I trust that this answers your question.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish King', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Trish King
General Manager
Acute Operations