



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,  
Disability Services/Community Operations,  
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27<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Deputy Catherine Murphy,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
e-mail: [catherine.murphy@oireachtas.ie](mailto:catherine.murphy@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

#### **PQ 50568/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the locations of feeding clinics across the State supporting persons with disabilities who have difficulties swallowing and are prone to choking due to their disabilities.*

#### **HSE Response.**

The causes and associations of dysphagia (swallowing difficulty) with different disease states are different among different age groups. For example, infancy and early childhood dysphagia may be associated with neurodevelopmental delay and older age groups have more prominent dysphagia related to stroke, neurodegenerative disease and dementia.

Notwithstanding the cause or the age of the person affected by dysphagia, Speech and Language Therapists working in Acute Services and or Primary Care, Older Persons Services and Disability Services play a primary role in the evaluation and treatment of feeding, eating, drinking and swallowing (FEDS) disorders.

Assessment and management for FEDS may take place in a Primary Care Centre, Disability Services including Childrens' Disability Network Teams for children aged 0 to 18, Community Hospital, Community Nursing Unit, or the patient's own home. Very young babies requiring support around FEDS might be accessing services via Primary Care SLTs. Where videofluoroscopy and similar assessments are required, the person will be referred to an acute hospital setting.

A Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) is specially trained to manage FEDS needs. An SLT can liaise with the person themselves, family members and members of the multi-disciplinary team and where indicated, a Swallow Care Plan is provided. A Speech and Language Therapist may work with, or refer a patient onward to Occupational Therapists, Dieticians, Physiotherapists and Psychologists where necessary. Where FEDS needs are identified, swallowing status is continually assessed, monitored and reviewed.

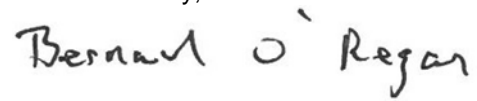


Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

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Service

While clinics specifically named as “Feeding Clinics” may not be available throughout the country; feeding, eating, drinking and swallowing (FEDS) needs are managed in several different ways as outlined above to ensure a person’s needs are adequately addressed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Head of Operations - Disability Services,**  
**Community Operations**