



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht
Cúram Sláinte Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú,
An Mhí Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse
Sláinte, Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar
Ardáin, An Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh
Fhailí.

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6th October, 2021

Mr Charlie Flanagan T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: Parliamentary Question – 46361/21

To ask the Minister for Health the circumstances surrounding the relocation of the adult audiology service from St. Fintan's, Portlaoise to Tullamore; when this service will resume in County Laois; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Charles Flanagan

Dear Deputy Flanagan,

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. I have examined the matter and I outline the position as follows.

The Audiology service for Laois is based in the St. Fintans Complex, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. The complex has been undergoing significant renovation works for the past 2 years; the next phase of the renovations includes full renovation of the Audiology service and room. Audiology appointments require a sound proof room and this must be installed by certified suppliers to European standards. It is not possible to keep the Audiology service in the building while such significant renovations are taking place and there are no other rooms in the county that meet these standards. The Audiology room in Portlaoise catered for adults and children over the age of 4; children under the age of 4 were facilitated in Tullamore Health Centre. A request for alternative accommodation was sought and following a review of available spaces a decision was made that the most appropriate accommodation was a spare Audiology room in Tullamore Health Centre, where the Audiology Service already had appropriate accommodation.

It is acknowledged that this adds extra travel time to clients but there were no other options. The move is on a temporary basis and when the renovations are complete the people of Laois will have a state-of-the art facilities to enjoy. Unfortunately it is necessary to move the Service while the HSE wait for the renovations to be complete.

The Audiology service has been advised that the renovation to the Audiology room will be complete by early 2022, this means the service will be relocated for 8-10 months.

There are currently 4 Audiologists and one assistant audiologist employed by the Midlands Community Audiology Service. This means that the service now has a full complement of staff and the service is starting to see a real reduction in waiting times for Audiology appointments. The service management allocates appointments to clients of all 4 counties on an equitable basis.

The waiting time have been affected by Covid19 and by the recent HSE Cyber-attack, with the current waiting time for Routine Laois clients is 84 weeks. We hope to have this reduced substantially by year end.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Des O'Flynn', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Des O'Flynn
Chief Officer
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation