

11th February, 2022

Mr. Colm Burke, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 4352/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the estimated timeframe for when the new outpatient ophthalmology services for the South/South West HSE area currently being developed in Ballincollig, County Cork to be fully operational; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Burke,

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.

In relation to the proposed Ophthalmology Unit in Ballincollig I can confirm that the physical building is on target to be ready by end of Q2 2022.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, South South West Hospital Group and South Infirmary Victoria Hospital are currently working collaboratively to develop a Regional Eye Care Service based in the new Primary Community Care Centre located in Ballincollig Cork. This new service will provide a designated specialised infrastructure where all community procedures related to Ophthalmology will be performed and incorporate Multidisciplinary Team Working between multiple grades of ophthalmology staff to deliver the best outcomes for both children and adults.

This proposal is in alignment with the strategic direction and recommendations of the Primary Care Eye Services Review Group report and the Model of Eye Care under the National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Ophthalmology.

The NCP for Ophthalmology recommends the integration of hospital and community care, with clinicians and care providers working in teams, as the best approach to deliver care for patients and to address the structural deficits in the current system. The efficient operation of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) is critical to the delivery of primary eye care. Implementing a more community based model will improve access to care and will help address the current adult and Paediatric waiting list crisis. A clear governance structure for the MDTs, with clinical audits, will ensure that the standards of clinical care are maintained.

Furthermore, this proposal is aligned to the following goals in the Sláinte care Implementation Strategy 2018

- Expand community-based care to bring care closer to home.
- Increase integration between the hospital sector and community based care.
- Develop new models of more effective and integrated care that drive value and maximise use of resources.

Pending completion of the actual building in Q2 2022 and approval of required funding to deliver the specialised eye care service, additional work will need to be completed on equipping, specialist ICT infrastructure, completion of memorandum of understand across services, transfer of personnel from various services and completion of numerous recruitment campaigns. Hence the timeline for this project to be operational is Q4 2022.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Priscilla Lynch', enclosed in a light blue rectangular border.

Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare