



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
Clár Cúraim Pobail Feabhsaithe &
Conarthaí Príomhchúraim
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Urlár 2, Páirc Ghnó Bhóthar na Modhfheirme,
Bóthar na Modhfheirme, Corcaigh, T12 HT02

Office of the Assistant National Director
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts
Health Service Executive
Floor 2, Model Business Park,
Model Farm Road, Cork, T12 HT02

www.hse.ie
T: 021-4928512
E: primarycare.strategy@hse.ie

Deputy Colm Burke,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

22nd March, 2022

PQ Ref: 5018/22 - To ask the Minister for Health if consideration will be given to the implementation of a new eye-care programme for school-going children (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Colm Burke

PQ Ref: 8631/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the details of the transfer of care for children aged 8 plus years to local optometrists to reduce waiting lists and enhance access to primary eye care services; if the anticipated six- to-nine-month timeframe for conclusion of this project in 2022 is on target; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Colm Burke

Dear Deputy Burke,

I refer to your recent parliamentary questions which were passed to the HSE for response.

The Primary Care Eye Services Review Group (PCESRG) Report was launched on 28th June, 2017. The Report sets out the current levels of service, models of service provision and the consultation process undertaken with patients, advocates, ophthalmic staff and representative bodies. It also highlights the limitations of the current model of service delivery and sets out the way forward for a significant amount of eye services to be delivered in a Primary Care setting. The recommendations from the PCESRG Report also complement the Model of Care developed by the National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology.

The Primary Care Eye Services Review Group Report remains current and the HSE continues to implement the following services:

- Establishing adult and paediatric primary care eye teams in CHOs 6 and 7.
- Establishing an adult primary care eye team and expanding the paediatric primary care eye team in CHO 9.
- Equipped CHOs 6, 7 & 9 to support their new and/or expanded primary care eye teams.
- Completing a proposal to transfer the care of children aged 8+ years to the care of local private optometrists.

To date, implementation of the Report has focused on establishing paediatric eye care teams in CHOs 6 & 7 as well as expanding the paediatric eye care team in CHO



9. These teams would include ophthalmologists, optometrists, orthoptists, nurses and technicians.

In CHO9, an initiative by the Community Paediatric Ophthalmology Service at the Grangegorman Primary Care Centre addressing a waiting list for care was the winner of the Innovation in Service Delivery Award at the recent HSE Health Service Excellence Awards. This initiative at the Grangegorman Primary Care Centre saw over 2,700 children on the list screened in just three weeks. It also enabled the training of the optometrist and orthoptist into expanded roles. See the link below for further details:

https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/our-health-service/making-it-better/community-ophthamology-initiative-sees-over-2-700-children-screened-in-three-weeks.html?utm_source=broadcast&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=story_telling&utm_content=community_ophthamology_initiative

The progress of the teams in CHOs 6, 7 & 9 is under review and will guide future rollout of teams across other parts of the country.

In late 2019 / early 2020, a project team was established to progress the extension of the Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) to children aged 8+, an initiative with a wide ranging membership including representation from the DOH. A programme to progress the project was established and had commenced its work programme but unfortunately, due to the requirement to prioritise resource to respond to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to pause this programme.

There is now a renewed commitment to progress the Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) project to children aged 8+ through the reconvening of the project team, with the augmentation of the membership, as required, to bring the project to fruition, while ensuring alignment with the appropriate scheduled care initiatives. The projected timeframe for the conclusion of the project remains at 6 – 9 months.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts**