



Children's Health Ireland

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann (SLÉ), Herberton, Siúlán San Séamas, Rialto, D08 HP97, Éire  
Children's Health Ireland (CHI), Herberton, St James's Walk, Rialto, D08 HP97 Ireland

Our Ref: PQ 54557/22

08<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Deputy Jennifer Whitmore**  
**Dáil Eireann**  
**Dublin 2**

Dear Deputy Whitmore

I refer to your PQ below which has been forwarded to me for attention. Firstly, please accept my apologies for the delay in issuing a response.

**PQ 54557/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide a breakdown of the allocation of the €19 million to paediatric orthopaedics in 2022, including detailed amounts allocated for very complex cases, scoliosis and for spina bifida; the amount allocated between CHI, both at Temple Street and Crumlin, and the Cappagh; the additions that the funding has provided in the way of additional staff or resources; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

#### **Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Response:**

In February of this year Children's Health Ireland (CHI) welcomed the announcement of funding approved from the Department of Health to bring down waiting times for access to children's services in CHI, with Scoliosis and Spina Bifida a priority focus within the Paediatric Orthopaedic specialty. The funding also supported a joint initiative with the National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh to substantially increase the clinically appropriate paediatric Orthopaedic Scoliosis and Spina Bifida work undertaken in the National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh.

The *Waiting List Scoliosis/Spina Bifida Action Plan* and funding was formally agreed with the HSE and Department of Health in April of this year. This plan covered Paediatric Orthopaedic services in CHI at Crumlin, CHI at Temple Street, the National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh and the Blackrock Clinic.

As at the end of October 2022, across CHI at Crumlin and CHI at Temple Street, 419 spinal procedures have been undertaken. This is 158 more surgeries when compared with 261 cases undertaken in the same period last year and is an increase of 61%. In 2022 an additional 33 spinal surgeries have been completed in The National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh (NOHC).

Supporting the surgical waiting lists with access to theatre/bed capacity will provide additional infrastructure for scoliosis surgeries. There are plans in place to achieve this with Temple



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Street opening a 5<sup>th</sup> theatre in Q2 2023 which will support additional orthopaedic activity and CHI at Crumlin expanding orthopaedic bed capacity on St. Joseph's Ward opening in Q1 2023.

- Significant progress has been made this year with regard to increasing the number of surgeries undertaken which is up by 152 (54%) on the same period last year.
- Long waiting times have also been reduced with 32% fewer children waiting greater than 12 months and 24% less waiting greater than 4 months.
- An increase in referrals, or new additions to the waiting list of 30% this year means that the impact of this increased activity is not visible when looking at total patients waiting.
- 65 foot and ankle surgeries have been undertaken for children with spina bifida which has exceeded the target of 63 for 2022.

A post COVID-19 surge in referrals to hospitals was expected but numbers could not be predicted. In CHI at Crumlin and CHI at Temple Street there has been a 33 per cent increase in referral numbers for Spinal Fusions in 2022 compared to 2019 (increased from 164 to 218). Despite this increase in referrals and resulting increase in the numbers on the waiting list, more children are being treated and waiting times are coming down.

### **Breakdown of the funding received**

- Funding approved in April 2022 total = €19.23m
- To Cappagh and CHI
- Funding included both one off funding for building work and equipment (€4.18m)
- And recurrent funding for additional staffing to run services (€15.05m).
- The new funding is primarily for equipment and additional staff to reduce waiting lists for all children on the CHI waiting lists, with a particular focus on Scoliosis and Spina Bifida. This means extra theatre capacity, beds and MRI services.



**How the extra funding is being utilised**

**Update on one off building and equipment funding**

CAPITAL INITIATIVE	Euro	PROJECT STATUS	Target Operational Dates
ADDITIONAL BEDS CRUMLIN (14)	0.62m	4 X IP Beds - underway 9 x IP Beds – underway	Feb 2023 Jan 2022
SECOND MRI CRUMLIN	2.42m	Under construction	Dec 2022 completion Jan 2023 Operational
5TH THEATRE TEMPLE ST	1.14m	Delayed due to building delays in Temple St MRI installation as a result of supplier fault.	Q2 2023
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.18m</b>		

Note 1 : In addition to the above, further one off capital funding has been allocated to create additional beds in CHI at Temple St and to create additional theatre capacity at CHI Crumlin

Note 2: In addition to the second MRI at Crumlin, CHI at Temple St has installed a new second MRI and a new CT scanner in Sept 2022.

**Update on recurring staffing funding**

INITIATIVE	COST (fye)	Description	Operational Date
Additional Beds (24)	3.90m	11 Beds Temple St. 13 Beds Crumlin	May 2022 - Temple St Jan and Feb 2023– Crumlin
Additional Theatre capacity	5.40m	Additional lists Temple St Additional lists Crumlin Additional list Blackrock Includes multiple staffing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CNM3 Senior Orthopaedic Nurse</li> <li>- Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon</li> <li>- Senior Nurse Spina Bifida</li> <li>- Data Coordinator Spina Bifida</li> <li>- Senior Psychologist Orthopaedics Scoliosis</li> <li>- Theatre nursing</li> </ul>	Additional lists and activity have commenced since May 2022. Significant capacity will be added in Temple St and Crumlin once theatre building work completed. Est Q2 2023 Temple Street Q1 Crumlin
Crumlin 2 <sup>nd</sup> MRI Staffing	2.35m	Recruitment underway	Jan 2023
Cappagh Kids	3.40m	Additional lists Cappagh	Implemented May 2022
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.05m</b>		



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## Challenges

- Recruitment remains a challenge in some areas as we continue to recruit for the service.
- Winter seasonal illness has commenced with unprecedented numbers of attendances and children awaiting beds in the Emergency Departments. This is having an impact on all hospital services and in particular on inpatient and PICU bed capacity, this has slowed progress but our commitment to continuing to improve our services remains and developments are on-going to achieve this.
- Building work is unpredictable in terms of timing and costs in the current environment.
- We will continue to work with our advocacy groups, families and patients to ensure they are informed at every point.

Yours sincerely

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**Joe Gannon**

**Chief Operations Officer**

**Email: [joe.gannon@nchg.ie](mailto:joe.gannon@nchg.ie)**