

27th September 2022

Deputy Róisín Shortall T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2
E: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ 44065/22 – Establishment of an Irish gender identity health service for children and young persons

“To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the establishment of an Irish gender identity health service for children and young persons; the number of posts that will allocated to this service by role; the status of the recruitment campaign; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Shortall,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question seeking an update on the establishment of an Irish gender identity health service for children and young persons, which has been referred to the Ireland East Hospital Group for direct response.

I have had this matter examined and am advised that Gender services for young people in Ireland should be developed in line with the recommendations of the Cass Review. This would align Ireland with the current development of specialist services for children and younger people in the rest of Europe.

The National Gender Service propose that they could deliver such a service by extending their age range downwards and by working with local CAMHS within a defined clinical network. Such a service will require a new Model of Care that would include a wide range of clinical disciplines, and not just incorporate Endocrinology, Psychiatry and Psychology. Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Speech and Language Therapy and Specialist Nursing should also be integral to any new gender service for younger people. Given the high prevalence of autism in people attending gender services, expertise in autism should be incorporated in the clinical team.

Prospective service users and their families deserve a safe and effective service that addresses all their needs comprehensively within a robust clinical framework. This service should be developed as a priority and resourced sufficiently to minimise wait times to no more than a period of months (rather than the years that people currently wait to be seen).

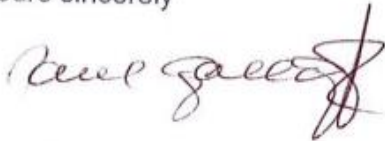


To develop this service, the National Gender Service recommend the following:

- That a Working Group is established and tasked with the development of a Model of Care for younger people in line with the recommendations of the Cass Review.
- That this Working Group complete its work efficiently (within no more than six month), using the Cass Review's final report as a template, so that we can delineate the resource requirements for the proposed service without delay.
- That once the Working Group has completed its report, there should be immediate resourcing of the posts needed so that recruitment can begin without delay.
- That the service for young people be integrated into the existing adult National Gender Service so that recruitment and retention will be enhanced by offering prospective candidates:
 - The security of established Governance structures at the National Gender Service.
 - The clinical support of specialist colleagues working at the National Gender Service
 - A model of care that offers service users a seamless transition of clinical care from adolescence to adulthood."

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Paul Gallagher
Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery