



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 44530/22 and PQ 44534/22

20th September 2022

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald
Dáil Eireann
Dublin 2

Dear Deputy McDonald

I refer to your recent PQ's which have been forwarded to me for attention.

PQ 44530 22: To ask the Minister for Health the progress that has been made in completing 67 additional spinal fusion surgeries and 28 additional spinal procedures for children with scoliosis as well as an additional 141 procedures for children with spina bifida following his announcement earlier in 2022 of an additional €17.43 million of current and capital funding to increase orthopaedic activity at Children's Health Ireland.

PQ 44534 22: To ask the Minister for Health if the additional current and capital funding for orthopaedic activity at Children's Health Ireland which includes various sections (details supplied) has been used solely to increase orthopaedic activity at CHI; and if not, if the budgets have in part or in whole been reallocated or used to fund other areas of care in CHI.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Response:

As outlined in our letter addressed to you dated 12th of September, 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.



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As at the end of August 2022, across these hospitals, 342 spinal procedures have been undertaken - 115 more surgeries when compared with 227 cases undertaken in the same period last year.

Progress has also been made with reducing the longest waiting times for scoliosis treatment:

- Reduction in the number of patients waiting over four months from 99 to 72 (27 per cent reduction since January 2022)
- Reduction in patients waiting over 12 months for surgery from 34 to 21 (38 per cent reduction since January 2022)
- The total spinal waiting list has reduced from 224 to 212 in the same period.
***Data period up to 26th of August 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 February/March 2022 total = €19.23m
- 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 across CHI sites since February 2022

| Update on one off building and equipment funding – 5 Sept 2022 | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| CAPITAL INITIATIVE | Euro | PROJECT STATUS | Target Operational Dates |
| ADDITIONAL BEDS CRUMLIN (14) | 0.62m | 4 X IP Beds - underway 1 x Surgery Day Bed - underway 9 x IP Beds – underway | Dec 2022 Oct 2022 Dec 2022 |
| SECOND MRI CRUMLIN | 2.42m | Under construction | Dec 2022 |
| 5TH THEATRE TEMPLE ST | 1.14m | Delayed due to building timetable | Q1 2023 |
| Total | 4.18m | | |
| 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 – 5 Sept 2022 | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INITIATIVE | COST (fve) | Description | Operational Date |
| Additional Beds (24) | 3.90m | 11 Beds Temple St. 13 Beds Crumlin | May 2022 - Temple St December 2022 – Crumlin |
| Additional Theatre capacity | 5.40m | Additional lists Temple St Additional lists Crumlin Additional list Blackrock Includes multiple staffing: - CNM3 Senior Orthopaedic Nurse - Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Senior Nurse Spina Bifida - Data Coordinator Spina Bifida - Senior Psychologist Orthopaedics Scoliosis - Theatre nursing | 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 Q1 2023 |
| Crumlin 2 nd MRI Staffing | 2.35m | Recruitment underway | Jan 2023 |
| Cappagh Kids | 3.40m | Additional lists Cappagh | From May 2022 |
| Total | 15.05m | | |



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Challenges

- Recruitment remains a challenge in some areas as we continue to recruit for the service. As with any Winter, activity can be unpredictable and there may be the need to postpone some elective surgery.
- Building work is also 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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Chief Operations Officer
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