

14th September, 2022

Mr. Colm Burke TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref: 44541/22

"To ask the Minister for Health when it is proposed to open the new Ophthalmology Unit in Ballincollig, Cork as part of the overall development in the South and South West HSE area; if funding has now been provided to fully equip the building; if he will provide an adequate number of staff to provide Ophthalmology Services there; the expected date when it will 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.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, the South South West Hospital Group and South Infirmary Victoria University 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 Sláintecare Implementation Strategy 2018:

- Expanded community-based care to bring care closer to home;
- Increased integration between the hospital sector and community based care.
- Development of new models of more effective and integrated care that drive value and maximise use of resources.

Please note that the above proposal is pending approval of a business case submitted for appropriate staffing to deliver Integrated the Eye Care Service as set out above. At this time the business case has

not been approved and no further timeline can be provided. The building in Ballincollig is now operational and ready for equipping pending funding approval.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,



**Susanne O'Sullivan,
Acting Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare.**

