



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 63877/22

01<sup>st</sup> February 2023

**Deputy Sean Fleming**  
**Dáil Eireann**  
**Dublin 2**

Dear Deputy Fleming

I refer to your recent PQ which has been forwarded to me for attention.

**PQ 63877/22: To ask the Minister for Health when facilities will be provided at a clinic (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**Details supplied:**

When Tallaght Neurofibromatosis Clinic will accept the referral of new patients again, when the diagnostic equipment at the Neurofibromatosis Clinic in Tallaght University Hospital will be improved and when a paediatric dermatologist, a paediatric neurologist will be made available and when an Optical Coherence Tomography machine in the ophthalmology department will be resolved

**Children's Health Ireland Response:**

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) can advise that the Neurofibromatosis (NF1) service in CHI at Tallaght is under the care of a general paediatrician and provides a service for over 130 patients with NF1 from all over the country. The service is not a funded national service and children with a diagnosis of NF1 also avail of services closer to home at their nearest hospital.

The volume of referrals to the NF1 service at CHI at Tallaght has increased considerably as the unique one stop clinic provides valued patient and family experience. The increase in demand coupled with challenges in accessing the multi-specialty clinical teams and associated diagnostics, has resulted in a situation where the acceptance of new patients had been temporarily paused.

Notwithstanding the capacity challenges in accessing diagnostics and specialist services, CHI at Tallaght are committed to scheduling new referrals while looking for more creative ways to manage the older, low risk patients. This work is underway and we are optimising existing capacity to schedule a volume of new referrals currently.



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CHI are committed to reviewing the needs of this patient group and are working together to enhance the quality and equity of care provided to this vulnerable cohort of children, across all CHI sites and as we plan to move to the New Children's Hospital.

CHI are also exploring an integrated approach with some community based services and working with the regional and general paediatric hospitals to support continued access to services closer to the patient's home. This option is consistent with the strategic objectives of the Sláintecare model of healthcare delivery.

I can advise that there is currently a recruitment campaign for a paediatric dermatologist at CHI at Tallaght.

There are currently 70 children with Neurofibromatosis (NF1) that attend a paediatric neurologist at CHI at Temple Street. There is currently no plan to appoint more neurologists to support the service.

CHI are working in partnership with representatives of the NF1 patient advocacy group (NF Ireland) on all aspects of service delivery and service development as summarised above.

Finally, please note that the Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) machine is under the remit of Tallaght University Hospital (TUH).

Yours sincerely

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