



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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6th July 2023

Deputy Collins,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 32661/23 – To ask the Minister for Health if he will respond to research (details supplied), published on 6 June 2023, which reveals that services for over-8s are based on a geographic lottery to access children’s eye care with very little access in some areas, particularly in the north west and parts of the greater Dublin region; if the HSE will fast-track the roll-out on a standardised optometrist-led eye care programme for over-8s and a timeframe to introduce same; to provide a breakdown nationally of where this care is now; and the plans for the future.

-Joan Collins

Dear Deputy Collins,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 32661/23) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE is in the process of implementing multidisciplinary community-based Integrated Eye Care teams, which include Optometrists working within the HSE. These teams will facilitate assessment, prioritisation, diagnoses, management and treatment and in some cases pre-op/post-op care, and where required, refer patients to acute Ophthalmology services, enabling most patients to be seen in their own locality, and when required, refer patients onwards for specialist input. In the areas where the new paediatric pathway has been implemented, the paediatric waiting list has been successfully brought within best practice timelines. This new pathway is now being rolled out nationally and we look forward to similar positive results.

The HSE supports the plan to discharge existing paediatric patients aged 8 and over who have completed their medical treatment. This means that their annual review would be delivered by independent optometrists. It is agreed that this plan should be implemented nationally acknowledging this is being progressed in some areas and that discussions are continuing in relation to the fee structure.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations