



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,  
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.  
D08 W2A8.

Office of the Head of Operations,  
Community Operations - Primary Care

Rm 243, Dr Steevens Hospital,  
Steevens Lane, Dublin 8. D08 W2A8.

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

T: 01 6352209/2682  
E: [community.primarycare@hse.ie](mailto:community.primarycare@hse.ie)

26<sup>th</sup> June 2023

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

**PQ 29842/23 – To ask the Minister for Health to provide his response to an organisation’s (details supplied) call for a national eye-care programme for children aged 8-16 years; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**-Holly Cairns**

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Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 29842/23) 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,

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**Seán McArt**

General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations