



**03<sup>rd</sup> May 2023**

Mr. John McGuinness, T.D.,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

PQ **20714/23**: To ask the Minister for Health if patients on waiting lists will be encouraged to opt for the treatment abroad scheme where appropriate; and if the scheme can be streamlined in order to make it more efficient and user friendly.

Dear Deputy McGuinness,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

The HSE welcomes the recent report of the Ombudsman and is committed to implementing each of the recommendations in the report relating to the Cross Border Directive Scheme, the Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme and the Treatment Abroad Scheme.

Since June 2104, when the CBD was transposed into Irish legislation, the HSE has approved 30,781 applications for these schemes at a cost of over €205m. The HSE operates the EU Cross Border Directive (CBD) scheme for people entitled to public patient services in Ireland who may seek to avail of those services in another EU/EEA member state. The Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme (NIPHS), which became operational from 1 January 2021, enables persons ordinarily resident in the State to access and be reimbursed by the HSE for private healthcare accessed in Northern Ireland, provided such healthcare is publicly available within Ireland. The Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) allows for the funding of a public patient referred by his/her treating consultant in Ireland to the public healthcare system of another EU/EEA country, Switzerland or the UK, for treatment which is not available in Ireland.

The HSE is committed to ensuring the delivery of these schemes and to providing ongoing assurance that all service users and applicants to the schemes receive the highest standard of public service that they are entitled to.

The HSE is committed to ensuring quality care for service users and views the findings of the Ombudsman's report as an opportunity to make these services more effective and efficient inclusive of communication improvements with service users.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Walsh'.

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**David Walsh**  
**National Director**  
**National Schemes & Reimbursement**