



Access & Integration,
Room 138, Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8.
D08 W2A8

14th August 2024

Mr Patrick Costello TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 25275 To ask the Minister for Health if the reimbursement parameters for cataract surgery covered under the Northern Ireland planned healthcare scheme versus the EU Cross Border Directive scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Costello,

Thank you for your parliamentary question referenced above which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

In general the Cross Border Directive (CBD) scheme which is based on the provisions of EU Directive 2011/24/EU allows public patients in Ireland, to access healthcare to which the patient would have been entitled to in Ireland, in another EU or EEA country, of which cataract surgery is included. The patient pays upfront for the treatment and claims reimbursement from the HSE upon return subject to terms and conditions e.g. submission of documentation etc. The reimbursement which the home country makes to the patient is the cost of the treatment in the public healthcare sector in Ireland or the cost of the treatment abroad, whichever is the lesser. Public healthcare sector costs in Ireland are set out in Diagnostic Related Groups (DRGs) and the list of DRGs and associated costs are published on the HSE's CBD webpage.

In 2020, the UK exited the EU (Brexit). At that time the majority of patients using the CBD were accessing their healthcare in Northern Ireland. In recognition of the impact of the UK exit from the EU on patients who use the scheme, and in order to mitigate the loss of access to private healthcare providers in NI for persons resident in Ireland under the CBD scheme, on the 28th December 2020 the Government approved the implementation of a new Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme (NIPHS).

The NIPHS which became operational from 1 January 2021 on an administrative basis, enables persons ordinarily resident in the State to access and be reimbursed for private healthcare in Northern Ireland by the HSE, provided such healthcare is publicly available within Ireland, such as cataract surgery. In line with the provisions of the CBD, the NIPHS allows the HSE to reimburse the cost of the healthcare in private healthcare sector of Northern Ireland or the cost of the healthcare in the State by the HSE, whichever is the lesser. Again the cost of that care that would have been delivered by the HSE is determined by reference to the appropriate DRG cost.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Frances McNamara', written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Frances McNamara
Assistant National Director