



22nd May, 2024

Deputy Jim O'Callaghan, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 20590/24

To ask the Minister for Health the proposed start date for the implementation of the proposals in the National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology, and in particular the transfer of care of children aged 8+ years to local private optometrists; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Ophthalmology on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The implementation of the HSE's National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Ophthalmology Model of Eye Care (2017)¹ is well underway. One of the key objectives of the model is the expansion of specialist eye services outside of the acute hospitals.

Integrated eye care teams are being established in primary eye care centres. These teams include Consultant Medical Ophthalmologists, Optometrists, Orthoptists, Nurses and Ophthalmic Technicians. These integrated eye care teams are delivering both paediatric care and specialist adult services, including glaucoma and medical retina. Pre and post-operative care for cataract patients is also being delivered in the primary care centres.

Paediatric waiting lists have been significantly reduced and indeed eliminated in parts of the country, with the roll-out of integrated eye care teams to all areas continuing, subject to resourcing.

The National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Ophthalmology supports the discharge of patients over 8 years of age who have completed their medical treatment, to their local optometrist for ongoing refractive care. This has commenced in some parts of the country and continues to be rolled-out nationally, subject to resources.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Horgan
General Manager

References

1. HSE National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Ophthalmology Model of Eye Care (2017), available at:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/clinical-strategy-and-programmes/model-of-eye-care.pdf>

