



Ref: PQ 6738/25

21<sup>st</sup> May 2025

**Deputy Marie Sherlock**  
**Dáil Eireann**  
**Dublin 2**

Dear Deputy Sherlock

I refer to your parliamentary question below which has been forwarded to me for attention. Firstly, please accept my apologies for the delay in issuing a response.

Please note that information was sought from Cork University Hospital (CUH) for inclusion in this response.

**PQ 6738/25 – To ask the Minister for Health the amount of staff and clinicians allocated to cleft lip and palate services in Cork and Dublin respectively; the associated support services needed for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

#### **Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Response:**

The Dublin Cleft Centre (DCC) and the Cork Cleft Unit (CCU) deliver high quality, well-coordinated multidisciplinary services for the management of cleft lip and palate and non-cleft related velopharyngeal dysfunction.

#### **The DCC multidisciplinary team comprises the following:**

- Plastic surgeons with specialist training in cleft lip and palate surgery – 0.5 WTE
- Cleft service managers / coordinators – 1 WTE
- Speech and language therapists (SLT) specialising in cleft palate - 2 WTE Crumlin and 1.8 WTE Temple Street
- Cleft nurse specialists (CNS) - 1 WTE Temple Street and 1 WTE Crumlin
- Audiologists - Audiology provides a testing service on the days of the cleft combined clinics and the cleft audit clinics. Testing also conducted on adhoc dates when the cleft team refer into Audiology.
- Orthodontists - Service currently provided by St. James's Hospital
- Paediatric Dentists - 0.3 WTE
- Prosthodontists - Service currently provided by St. James's Hospital
- Oral and Maxillofacial surgeons - No designated WTE assigned to cleft services, however the Maxillofacial Surgeons are sometimes involved with cleft patients.

#### **Children's Health Ireland at Connolly | Crumlin | Tallaght | Temple Street**

**Our Mission** is to: Promote and provide child-centred, research-led and learning informed healthcare, to the highest standards of safety and excellence. We will do this in partnership with each other, with children, young people and their families through a network of children's services in Ireland.

**CRA Registered Charity Number (RCN):** 20202295 **Revenue Charitable Status CHY:** 22235

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- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeons / Airway - 0.2 WTE, shared service with Plastic Surgery
- Clinical Psychologist - 0.7 WTE
- Grade IV Temple Street – 1 WTE
- Grade IV Crumlin - 1 WTE

**The CCU multidisciplinary team comprises the following:**

- Plastic surgeon with specialist training in cleft lip and palate surgery
- Cleft coordinator/ Cleft nurse specialists (CNS), although this post has been delayed by embargo.
- Speech and language therapists (SLT) specialising in cleft palate
- Audiologists
- Orthodontists
- Paediatric Dentist
- Prosthodontist
- Oral and Maxillofacial surgeons
- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeons
- Clinical Psychologist/social work councilor

The provision of care for patients who were born with cleft lip and palate is in the process of centralisation into a National Cleft Centre, which will be based at Children's Health Ireland (CHI) and St. James's Hospital, with spoke clinics in Cork, Galway and Sligo. This is a positive development and cleft team members in each of the hospitals are working closely together to ensure that the high standard of cleft care provided to patients in all areas of the country is maintained.

Ms. Catherine de Blacam, Consultant Plastic Surgeon and clinical lead Cleft Services in CHI would welcome a meeting for any further clarification or queries if required.

Yours sincerely

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