



Ref: PQ 31839/25

14th July 2025

Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Eireann
Dublin 2

Dear Deputy Cullinane

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.

PQ 31839/25 – To ask the Minister for Health the number of the 54 children who were waiting longer than four months for their paediatric spinal surgery at the end of December 2024 that were offered the opportunity to get their spinal surgery abroad; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Response:

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) can advise that there were 54 patients waiting over four months for their procedure as of the end of December 2024. Of these 54 patients, 14 were on a waiting list for 'spinal other' procedures which are not part of the international outsourcing pathway process.

The decision on international outsourcing for complex scoliosis children is a live process that is constantly evolving. The decision for a family to have their child's surgery abroad is multi-faceted and is based on a range of considerations along with the initial consideration of clinical suitability. For most families, surgery in CHI is their preferred choice due to many factors.

Of the 40 patients waiting for Spinal Fusion procedures at the end of December 2024, 6 were offered an outsourcing pathway with the following outcome:

- 2 patients declined – family wanted to stay under consultant in CHI.
- 2 patients not passed as clinically suitable – too complex.
- 2 patients were accepted and passed for surgery abroad.

Of note 9 of the 54 patients are currently active on the spinal surgery waiting list at CHI. All remaining patients have either had their surgery completed, are suspended due to personal / clinical reasons or were removed from the waiting list following the parents request or the multidisciplinary team (MDT).

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

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

Board Members: Prof James Browne (Chairman), Ms Mary Cryan, Ms Mary Donovan, Ms Catherine Guy, Dr Gavin Lavery, Ms Brigid McManus, Ms Eleanor O'Neill

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann



Children's Health Ireland

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann (SLÉ), Herberton, Siúlán San Séamas, Rialto, D08 HP97, Éire
Children's Health Ireland (CHI), Herberton, St James's Walk, Rialto, D08 HP97 Ireland

Of the 9 currently active this is inclusive of 1 patient who declined international outsourcing, and 1 other who is on the waiting list for a 'spinal other' procedure. The remaining 7 patients are currently not deemed suitable for international outsourcing due to clinical and personal reasons and are in active work up for their procedure at CHI.

Yours sincerely

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