



Ref: PQ 31842/25

01st August 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 31842/25 – To ask the Minister for Health the total number of spinal surgeries performed by each orthopaedic surgeon who performs spinal surgery, to date this year, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Response:

Please see information you require from Children's Health Ireland (CHI) below. In considering this request, as with all requests for access to personal data, CHI has carefully considered its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Consultant names constitute personal data within the meaning of Article 4(1) GDPR. Such data together with specific activity levels such as surgical volumes reveal information relating to an identified individual and their professional activities. As these figures may be linked to performance and/or clinical workload, the data is also considered to be evaluative in nature.

In accordance with the principles of data protection, in particular Article 5(1)(a) and (c) GDPR, CHI is required to ensure that any disclosure of personal data is both lawful and proportionate, and that it adheres to the principles of fairness and data minimisation.

In this case, CHI has determined that providing a named breakdown by consultant would not satisfy the requirements of the applicable data protection legislation. While individual patients may be entitled to access the name of their treating clinician under data protection law, this does not create a general entitlement for the public/other persons to receive consultant level activity data linked to identifiable individuals. The disclosure of such information without of a valid legal basis, and without sufficient safeguards is not possible and further, would risk unfairly infringing the rights of the individuals concerned.

To facilitate transparency and service accountability while upholding its data protection

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

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



obligations, CHI is instead providing the requested data in anonymised form, using nonidentifying labels such as Consultant 1, Consultant 2, etc. This approach ensures that no individual consultant is directly or indirectly identifiable, and that the data falls outside the scope of the GDPR, in accordance with Recital 26 GDPR.

We are of the opinion that this strikes an appropriate balance between the public interest in understanding service delivery and CHI's duty to safeguard the rights and freedoms of staff members in accordance with the applicable data protection legislation.

Number of spinal surgeries performed by Orthopaedic Consultants at CHI in 2025 – year to date 18 th of June	
Consultant 1	20
Consultant 2	55
Consultant 3	81
Consultant 4	38
Consultant 5	4
Consultant 6	13
Consultant 7	22
Consultant 8	1
Total	234

Please note that not all of the above consultants have full-time contracts in CHI (i.e. they have sessional commitments in other public hospitals) which is a factor in the variability.

Yours sincerely

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Director of Operations
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