

3 April 2024

Deputy Ged Nash
gerald.nash@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ12118.25: To ask the Minister for Health if there are plans to open up a diabetes eye-screening location in the Dundalk area; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Representative Question.

About Diabetic RetinaScreen

The Diabetic RetinaScreen (DRS) programme is for people in Ireland with diabetes and who are at risk of retinopathy, which is a complication of diabetes. Retinopathy is caused by high blood glucose (sugar) levels damaging the back of the eye (retina). It can cause blindness if left undiagnosed and untreated.

Diabetic retina screening is available free of charge. It is for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes aged 12 years and older. Screening is a way of detecting any changes to the retina. If retinopathy is found early, treatment can reduce or prevent damage to a person's sight. You can read more about the programme on our [website](#).

Screening in Dundalk

We aim to provide screening in an equitable way to everyone who is eligible. We screen in over 140 community-based locations to be as convenient as possible for as many people as possible.

The screening locations offered in Co. Louth are Drogheda Medical Centre and Ballsgrove Primary Care Centre in Drogheda. Participants are welcome to have screening in nearby counties such as Monaghan, if that is more convenient. There is no plan to open a diabetes eye screening clinic in the Dundalk area. We provide an up-to-date list of our screening locations in tabular form by county on our [website](#).

We welcome feedback from our participants and representatives on our screening locations and review our services regularly.

Be aware – symptoms of retinopathy

We encourage everyone who has diabetes to be aware of symptoms of retinopathy. People do not usually notice diabetic retinopathy in its early stages. Symptoms do not become obvious until the condition becomes more advanced.

If a person has diabetes, they should contact their GP or diabetes care team immediately if they experience the following symptoms:

- gradually worsening vision
- sudden vision loss
- shapes floating in your field of vision (floaters)
- blurred or patchy vision
- eye pain or redness

Teach Óstaí an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.
☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie



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These symptoms do not mean a person has diabetic retinopathy, but it is important to get them checked and that they do not wait until their next screening appointment.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy,

Chief Executive

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