



21 May 2025

Deputy Frankie Feighan, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 22725/25

To ask the Minister for Health if she will provide a report to Dáil Éireann on the availability of gastrointestinal ultrasound for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) patients in Ireland; the number of IBD patients who received gastrointestinal ultrasound scanning in Ireland in 2024 or an equivalent year; if she recognises the pivotal role of this testing in raising the standards of care and quality of life for IBD patients in Ireland; if she will declare the number of registered gastroenterologists who have been trained in the delivery of gastrointestinal ultrasound; if she agrees that training for clinicians will unlock this key therapeutic benefit for patients; if she will prioritise ensuring that this training will be made available to gastroenterologists; if she will ensure that ultrasound machines will be available at every center in Ireland where IBD patients receive treatment; and if she will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Feighan,

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 for Gastroenterology and Hepatology (NCP G&H) and the HSE's National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

An Inflammatory Bowel Disease working group was set up by the National Clinical Programme for Gastroenterology and Hepatology (NCP G&H). This Inflammatory Bowel Disease working group includes members with membership of the Intestinal Ultrasound (IUS) Steering Group, which is actively engaged in providing national training in IUS, as well as international training with IUS overseas partners. In Ireland, we now have 8 Consultant Gastroenterologists who have completed all parts of the international certification in intestinal ultrasound (IBUS) and who can deliver the service to patients and training to others.

In September, 2024, a training day was held in Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI) in Dublin, attended by both Consultants and Registrars who are completing their model 1 and 2 training. The major IBD centres have IUS machines and other centres are in the process of acquiring equipment.

The exact numbers of patients being scanned annually is unknown as we have no national database for IBD. Anecdotal data from each centre would suggest that approximately 400 patients are scanned at each institution annually. It is expected that these figures will grow as health care providers gain the necessary credentials.

Doctors Integrated Management E-system (DIME) within NDTP records the number of Consultants in employment in the specialty of Gastroenterology, broken down as follows:

Total number of Consultant in the specialty of Gastroenterology that were in employment at 18th March 2025

Consultant Gastroenterologist & General Physician	101
Consultant Gastroenterologist & General Physician (special interest Liver Disease)	14
Grand Total	115

This data was extracted from DIME (Doctors Integrated Management E-system) on 18th March 2025 and provides a snapshot for that timepoint. As DIME is a live system it must be noted that there can be variances in the figures published dependent on the run date of the report as entries can be made with a retrospective date. There may be variances and gaps in the data supplied by DIME in this snapshot to



data held within clinical sites, as DIME is dependent on clinical sites inputting details on their consultant and NCHD workforce.

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