



Oifig an Stiúrthoir Cúnta,
Cúram Priomhúil Rochtain agus Comhthathú,

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

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4th November 2025

Deputy McGrath,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 54017/25 - To ask the Minister for Health where children require appropriate eyecare and cannot be seen by a consultant ophthalmologist in the area, if there are any areas where children receive vouchers towards the cost of their eye care; if she will outline all the schemes available under which families can receive vouchers to assist them with the cost of their eye care; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

- Mattie McGrath

Dear Deputy McGrath,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 54017/25) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE is committed to ensuring that every child receives timely access to appropriate eye care services. Children's eyecare is provided primarily through the HSE's School Vision Screening Programme and community-based ophthalmic services.

When a child does not pass school vision screening or early years vision checks, they are referred to the community ophthalmology service for further assessment or in the absence of a local community service, children are referred to paediatric ophthalmology services in acute hospital settings.

In some regions, a voucher service has been introduced and developed to support access to ongoing care. Under this arrangement, children who are under the care of community ophthalmology services and who do not have amblyopia or strabismus, but who have a refractive error, may be discharged under the "over 8s" scheme to a high street optometrist for continuing refractive management.

In 2024, eight of the nine former Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) areas referred children to high street optometrists for follow-up care under this model.

With prior approval Ophthalmologists, Optometrists or Dispensing Opticians who have entered into a contractual arrangement with the HSE, may also provide dispensing services for those who are eligible.



In relation to those over the age of 12 Ophthalmologists or Optometrists who have entered into a contractual arrangement with the HSE may provide routine eye examinations for teenagers (aged 12-16) who are dependants of medical card holders or who are medical card holders in their own right.

The HSE continues to monitor and standardise these pathways to ensure equitable access to high-quality eye care for all children, regardless of their location.

I trust this is of assistance.

Seán McArt

General Manager

Primary Care Access & Integration