

## Overview of the HSE Scoliosis Waiting List Action Plan

### Introduction

Scoliosis affects approximately 1% of children and adolescents in Ireland. It is defined as a spinal curvature of more than 10 degrees to the right or left as the examiner faces the patient.

The management of scoliosis is complex and is determined by the severity of the curvature and skeletal maturity, which together helps predict the likelihood of progression. The conventional options for children and adolescents are: observation, back bracing (where the child is still growing) and surgery. Treatment options for scoliosis and spinal disorders are related to the underlying condition of each patient and their growth pattern, skeletal maturity and other factors.

The HSE, working with a number of stakeholders, has developed a plan to enable the reduction of the long waiting times for scoliosis surgery for children and young people. The *HSE Action Plan for Scoliosis* aims to ensure that no patient who requires surgery will be waiting more than four months for scoliosis surgery by the end of 2017. The Plan addresses treatment of children requiring both spinal fusion and other spinal procedures having regard to the input received from advocacy groups for scoliosis patients.

The HSE and the Children's Hospital Group are committed to deliver on short to medium term reduction in the waiting lists. In order to achieve the target, the approach set out in the Plan includes insourcing of surgical procedures within the Children's Hospital Group and the broader public hospital sector, as well as outsourcing initiatives, including private providers nationally and abroad. In tandem, the HSE and Children's Hospital Group are working to develop a long-term sustainable solution for scoliosis and paediatric orthopaedic cases.

### Patients to be treated under the Action Plan to achieve the Waiting List target by year end

Under the HSE's Plan, Table 1 below sets out the total number of patients to be treated to ensure that there are no patients waiting more than 4 months by the end of 2017:

*Table 1 (Waiting Lists as of 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017)*

Category	Crumlin	Temple Street	Tallaght	Total
Spinal Fusion	163	14		177
Other Spinal Procedures	99	20		119
Patients waiting for scoliosis procedures:			16	16
Predicted growth in waiting list between 9 <sup>th</sup> February and 31 <sup>st</sup> August				135
<b>Total</b>				<b>447</b>

In order to determine the surgical activity required to meet the four month target, the HSE conducted a multi-layered prospective analysis to estimate the number of patients who would be waiting for longer than four months by the end of December 2017. This analysis includes two groups of patients—

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- a) patients waiting longer than four months as at 9<sup>th</sup> February when the list was analysed (i.e. currently waiting patients), and
- b) an estimate of the number of patients expected to come onto the scoliosis waiting list after 9<sup>th</sup> February who would be waiting longer than four months by the end of the year (i.e. anticipated growth in the waiting list). This estimate was developed based on referral patterns and clinical presentations observed during 2016.

Therefore, in order to achieve the four month target, around 447 patients will need to receive treatment, with the exact number depending on individual clinical assessments.

### **Overview of the Action Plan**

Overall, there are three elements to the Plan–

- a) Tackling Current Waiting List (Phase I),
- b) Addressing Anticipated Growth in Waiting List up until August 2017 (Phase II), and
- c) Long-term strategy.

There are a number of core actions underpinning Phase I and II which are aimed at ensuring that all capacity options are fully optimised and robust controls in relation to waiting list management are in place, including: capacity and demand analysis, validation, engagement between hospitals to ensure appropriate clinical handover in relation to patients, clear monitoring and oversight of progress to achieve the target and effective liaison services in both Crumlin and Temple St to ensure that there is clear communication with patients and parents/guardians

#### *a) Tackling current waiting list (Phase I) - progress to date*

Table 2 below outlines the number of patients who have received treatment to date.

*Table 2*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Waiting List at 9 Feb</b>	<b>Patients treated (9 Feb to 29 May)</b>
Crumlin – spinal fusion	163	28
Crumlin – other spinal procedures	99	45
Temple street – spinal fusion	14	9
Temple Street – other spinal procedures	20	18
Tallaght	16	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100</b>

With regard to the development of capacity to address scoliosis waiting lists at Crumlin, the recruitment of additional nurses this year to date has led to one additional day of surgery per week. More recent recruitment success is expected to increase the theatre capacity in Crumlin by a further two days a week with effect from July.

In order to ensure that there is clear communication with patients and parents/guardians, both Crumlin and Temple Street Hospitals are appointing a liaison to support patients during the

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treatment process. In addition, a joint coordinator is being put in place to coordinate the scoliosis service across treating hospitals.

Finally, the Children's Hospital Group has established a paediatric scoliosis services co-design group to assist in the design of a contemporary, values-based and patient-centred approach to service delivery in scoliosis services.

*b) Addressing anticipated growth in the waiting list up until August 2017 (Phase II)*

The HSE has estimated that 135 new patients expected to come onto the scoliosis waiting list between 9<sup>th</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> August. The HSE will put plans in place for the treatment of these patients, including through outsourcing.

*c) Long-term strategy to sustain scoliosis services*

In tandem with this plan, the HSE and Children's Hospital Group are working to improve current services and develop a long-term sustainable solution for scoliosis and paediatric orthopaedic cases. The long-term strategy to sustain scoliosis services from 2018 will be prioritised by the Department of Health and the HSE in the context of the 2018 Estimates and 2018 HSE National Service Plan.

There are a number of known and potential risks to the success of this plan including retention of staffing, patient choice, increased demand and response to the tender proposals.

The HSE is working closely with the Children's Hospital Group and all of the stakeholders to mitigate these risks and ensure full delivery of the agreed actions and targets within the specified time frames.