

Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health
Oral Presentation (5 minutes)
October 25, 2017

Introductions:

Good Morning Chairman, Deputies, Senators,

My name is Eilish Hardiman, Chief Executive of the Children's Hospital Group. Thank you for the invitation here this morning to represent the Children's Hospital Group for the first stage of the legislative process on the Children's Health Bill. I would like to introduce my colleague Ms Valerie Plant, Chief Financial Officer, Children's Hospital Group and to acknowledge the presence of the 4 Boards involved in developing this General Scheme, Dr Jim Browne, Chair, Children's Hospital Group Board; Mr Turlough O'Sullivan, Vice Chair, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin; Mr Liam Dowdall, Chair, Tallaght Hospital; Mr Derek McGrath, Board Member, Temple Street Children's University Hospital and Ms Catherine Guy, Board Member, Children's Hospital Group Board. The commitment of these 4 Boards to the vision for children's health is truly commendable and clearly demonstrates agreement by the 4 boards to voluntarily transition from three standalone children's hospitals to a single legal structure to govern and manage paediatric services in Dublin as the central hub of a clinical network for paediatric services in Ireland.

The Children's Hospital Group is working with colleagues in the three children's hospitals, the HSE and the Department of Health to achieve the ambition of transforming acute paediatric services - one that will be equipped to serve the needs of children and young people in Ireland today, and for generations to come.

Central to this work is the implementation of a new national model of care for paediatric healthcare services in Ireland which will have at its centre a new children's hospital in Dublin providing tertiary and quaternary care, and two Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centres located on the campuses of Tallaght and Connolly Hospitals. The new children's hospital, currently under construction, will bring the three existing children's hospitals together under one roof and before this into a single legal entity. The network approach being planned will deliver care seamlessly across a network of services, working closely with our colleagues in the other hospital groups and community healthcare organisations as envisaged in the Sláintecare Report.

Integration

Paediatric services in Dublin are currently provided by three separate voluntary hospitals - Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin, Temple Street Children's University Hospital and the National Children's Hospital at Tallaght Hospital.

In parallel with the physical build of the new children's hospital and two paediatric outpatient and urgent care centres, there is an ambitious integration programme underway which will ensure that all staff and all clinical services are successfully brought together – operating as one - ahead of the physical move into the new buildings.

Our integration programme is focused on our people, on valuing and aligning different cultures, on integrating our ICT systems, standardising clinical and operational protocols, staff

recruitment and training. It touches all parts of the operations of the hospitals and all parts of service delivery and has at its centre the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people and also valuing our staff. This programme of integration is been undertaken at a time when we continue to deliver care and services in three busy acute hospitals.

This programme for change takes years to implement and therefore will be enabled greatly by the early enactment of the Children's Health Bill.

Current Situation

The three children's hospitals have long established histories between 60 – 196 years of delivery services and care to children, young people and their families.

The success of our integration will require the continued commitment to planning and implementation to ensure the reconfiguration of services is undertaken in the right way, within the right timeframe, for the patients that we serve.

To support this integration work from a legal and governance perspective, the three hospitals and their Boards have voluntarily agreed to come together as part of one new single entity. This new single entity on commencement will take over the governance and management of services currently provided by these hospitals and into which will transfer the rights and liabilities of the three hospitals.

The Children's Hospital Group Board has a new vastly experienced Board (Board Membership attached), must be put on a statutory footing as soon as possible to enable and facilitate the scale of work that is required and clear governance of the new services planned to open in 2019 at Connolly Hospital. It is critically important that Ireland's paediatric services are being delivered under the right governance structures, built on the vast experience of the existing boards in their governance of services.

It is an imperative that the planned integration work is undertaken by the appropriate legal structure. It will give impetus to our work, provide protection and assurance to our staff and patients and will act as a catalyst for progress to our continued programme of integration. Importantly, it also provides assurances for staff that their terms and conditions will remain the same as they transfer.

We are satisfied that the statutory model set out in the General Scheme provides the best support for a new legal entity in light of significant change management process that we are undertaking.

As you know, we announced the new name for children's health services on Monday last – Phoenix Children's Health. It is a particularly fitting name given what the mythical figure of The Phoenix represents – opportunity, transformation, and regeneration. We are entering into an extraordinary period of change in children's health and I know that you will agree with me when I say it is long overdue. This legislation will play a critical role in supporting us in the three hospitals and the Group for the single legal entity required to support our staff delivering paediatric services as we work to deliver the vision for children's healthcare.

I am happy to address any questions from committee member.

Thank You

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