

Department of Health Opening Statement
Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health
Children's Health Bill 2017
9.15 am, Wednesday 25 October 2017
Committee Room 3, LH2000, Leinster House

Good morning Chairman, Committee members.

My name is Fionnuala Duffy, I am Head of the Acute Hospital Policy Unit in the Department of Health with responsibility for overseeing the new children's hospital project. I am joined by my colleague Siobhán Kennan, Assistant Principal Officer in the same unit. Thank you for inviting us to speak to you about the Children's Health Bill.

The Bill is listed in the Government's Legislation Programme Autumn session 2017 for publication this session as a priority for the Department. Accordingly, the agreement by this Committee to prioritise scrutiny of the Heads is much appreciated.

Background to the Children's Health Bill

As you know, the development of the new children's hospital is an extraordinary opportunity to transform paediatric services for children in Ireland. It is essential that the three children's hospitals come together operationally well in advance of the move to the new facilities in order to ensure their effective functioning as a single entity, and to support their clinical, operational and cultural integration.

The Children's Health Bill provides for the creation of a new entity that will be responsible for the operation of the new children's main hospital and two paediatric OPD and urgent care centres at Connolly and Tallaght. The establishment of such an entity through legislation has the support of the three hospitals – Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Temple Street Hospital and the paediatric services in Tallaght. The development of the draft legislation has benefited enormously from the close engagement of the three hospital Boards with the Department through the Legal Entity Committee of the Children's Hospital Group Board.

Capital project Timescale

As the Minister advised at your Committee meeting last week, the new hospital will be completed by the middle of 2022. The Paediatric Outpatients & Urgent

Care Centre at Connolly will open in 2019 followed by the second centre at Tallaght in 2020. The new body will run the services on the existing sites at Tallaght, Temple Street and Crumlin until such time as the services can be provided from the new hospital and centres being developed.

It is essential that we have the right structure and approach in place to integrate the existing services over the next few years and to prepare for the delivery of the best possible paediatric healthcare in the new facilities.

Proposed legislation

On 26th July 2017, Government approved the drafting of a Bill based on the General Scheme we are discussing today. This legislation provides for the establishment of a new entity to run the children's hospital, to take on a leadership role nationally in relation to paediatric healthcare and to play a central role in the national roll out of the Model of Care for Paediatrics and Neonatology. Its functions also allow it to deliver on its remit for education and research commensurate with its status as the national leading body in children's healthcare.

The approach in drafting the Scheme has been to establish a distinct body with appropriate governance. The new entity will be managed and overseen by a twelve -member competency-based Board appointed by the Minister for Health. The Board will have sufficient autonomy to make the decisions required in order to effectively manage the operation of the hospital. This, for example, extends to managing property and entering into contractual arrangements, accepting gifts and engaging in philanthropy. In relation to accountability, the legislation provides for a requirement for Ministerial approval in consideration of borrowing and a mechanism for intervention in the case of failure on the part of the Board. This safeguard is essential given that this is the national tertiary paediatric hospital and the delivery of a safe, quality service must be assured.

As the existing hospitals will no longer provide services after the new facilities become operational, the legislation provides for the transfer of all staff, data, assets, rights and liabilities to the new body such as are appropriate for transfer. The Bill is included amongst the priority legislation for publication this session in the Government Legislation Programme for the Autumn session .While we are working on the basis of enactment by end Q1 2018, allowing for a reasonable timetable for publication and a smooth passage of the Bill through the Oireachtas, it is acknowledged that this is a tight timescale.

In addition to legislation enactment there are due diligence and merger processes to be concluded before commencement by Ministerial Order. A significant programme of due diligence is underway as part of the pre

commencement analysis and review work under the Children's Hospital Programme. The outcome of this work will be known and agreed before legislation commencement. We are anxious to have the body in place as soon as possible to lead the necessary preparations, including advance planning for the OPD and Urgent Care centres, and we have been advised by the Group CEO last week that the hospitals will be prepared for commencement by mid- 2018. However the Department, in conjunction with the HSE, will undertake an options appraisal of the pros and cons of commencement taking place during the financial year 2018 to inform final decisions on commencement timing.

Finally, the legislation also provides for certain amendments to the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board (Establishment) Order. These include that members of the Board should be appointed from among persons who have experience and expertise in relation to matters connected with the functions of the Board rather than on the nomination of bodies. The Scheme provides the legal mechanism for the dissolution of that Board in due course.

Provision is also being made for the option for the Minister for Health to make an order giving the Development Board responsibility for the planning, design, building, furnishing and equipping of the new maternity hospital to be located with the new children's hospital on the St James's campus. It is considered prudent to allow for this provision in this General Scheme, pending a final decision as to whether this function would be given to the Development Board.

Since the Government decision approving the drafting of legislation based on the General Scheme, the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel has been drafting the legislation and will conclude its drafting following the receipt of the report of this Committee to allow for publication of the Bill by year end.

Thank you, Chairman. We will be happy to address any follow up questions.

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Briefing note for Joint Oireachtas Committee - New Children's Hospital

1. Background

The new children's hospital on a campus shared with St James's Hospital will provide specialist and complex care for children and young people from all over Ireland, and with the Paediatric OPD and Urgent Care Centres at Connolly and Tallaght Hospitals, will be the regional hospital for the children of the Greater Dublin area. The overriding benefit of the new children's hospital and OPD Urgent Care Centres is to achieve better healthcare outcomes and to alleviate the burden associated with complex and life-threatening, and chronic conditions. The new children's hospital will be the national tertiary and quaternary hospital for all the children of Ireland. As well as delivering care within the hospital, the new hospital will have a hugely important role in education and research. It will have a leadership role for paediatric healthcare nationally, and will have a critically important role in education and research, with linkages to multiple academic partners.

2. Establishment of a new legal entity.

Currently the three children's hospitals operate as separate entities that are independently governed. The three children's hospitals have voluntarily agreed to merge into a new single legal entity providing services in their existing facilities, before transitioning to the new children's hospital on a campus shared with St James's Hospital, and to the two paediatric outpatient and urgent care centres at Connolly and Tallaght Hospitals.

This Bill provides for the establishment of a single body to govern and manage paediatric services, as well as to facilitate planning for the transition of staff and services to the outpatient and urgent care centres which will open several years ahead of the new children's hospital opening. It will also support the organisation of the clinical and non-clinical services in an integrated manner across the existing sites before the move to the new hospital.

As a body corporate established by an Act of the Oireachtas, the new entity will have the powers and functions it needs as the national tertiary paediatric service with the necessary status to take on a leadership role nationally in relation to paediatric healthcare and as an international player in paediatric research and innovation.

The General Scheme consists of ten parts, and will cover establishment, functions and powers, Board matters, employment including role of the CEO, and accountability and standards. The legislation will also provide for the transfer of assets, liabilities, subject to due diligence processes and any potential exposure for the State, as well as transfer of staff and data from Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Temple Street Children's University Hospital, and the National Children's Hospital at Tallaght Hospital, to the new body. Functions will include the delivery of health services, research, education, and related functions. Powers will include (inter alia) ownership of land and property, and ability to enter into contracts subject to necessary approvals. *(NOTE: The HSE owns the land on the St James's Hospital campus on which the hospital will be built and will continue to own the land and building once constructed.)*

There will be a Board of 12 members, including the Chair, with the first Board to comprise the Children's Hospital Group Board. Thereafter, the Board will be populated on the basis of Board and Ministerial nominees. All Board members will be appointed by the Minister. The Minister will have the power to remove individual Board members or the entire Board in certain circumstances.

Amendment of SI 246/2007: National Paediatric Hospital Development Board (Establishment) Order 2007

A secondary element of the legislation involves amendments to the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board (NPHDB) (Establishment) Order 2007.

The NPHDB is a body corporate established in 2007 by Statutory Instrument under the Health (Corporate Bodies) Act, with responsibility for delivering the children's hospital project. The functions of the NPHDB, as set out in the Establishment Order, include the planning, design, building, furnishing and equipping of a national paediatric hospital and, in addition functions in relation to planning for services, human resources and philanthropy. These additional functions are operational and therefore separate from the capital project itself. It is intended to delete these functions given that they are proper to, and will come under the aegis of, the new children's hospital body.

3. Vision for a new Model of Care for Paediatrics

The establishment of the new children's hospital also provides a unique opportunity to introduce a new model of care for all paediatric services which will enable us to tackle current and future challenges in child health. The HSE's National Clinical Programme for Paediatrics and Neonatology has developed *A New National Model of Care for Paediatric Healthcare Services in Ireland* to underpin the delivery of healthcare for children both in the present and the future. The model provides a blueprint for neonatal and paediatric services and will form the basis for all planned service developments in this area.

The new Model of Care sets out the vision for high quality, integrated, accessible healthcare services for children from birth to adulthood. The model is based on the principle of good quality care with an emphasis on early detection and prompt treatment. The model spans a range of care settings from community to hospital and specialist care. Healthcare services for children will be delivered as close to home as possible. The new Model of Care is based on a hub and spoke structure with the new children's hospital acting as the hub for paediatric care nationally. There will be clear links between the new children's hospital and all regional and local paediatric units. Specialists in the new children's hospital will provide outreach clinics in regional centres with the aim of ensuring that children are able to access the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

The model will ensure that all children can access the same standards of screening, diagnostics and treatment. The responsibilities of paediatric departments in all settings, the services they will provide and how they will work together are all set out in the model.

4. Integrating existing services

The capital project to build the new children's hospital and satellite centres will only provide buildings. The overall programme to deliver the new Children's Hospital entails both a complex merger of three different voluntary hospitals and a new build (in addition to a major ICT programme and co-location with an adult and the tri-located maternity hospital). A major programme of work is underway focused on transformative service change to merge three separate hospitals while maintaining existing services, patient safety and quality at three existing sites until transition is complete. For the Irish healthcare system, the project is unprecedented in scale and complexity. The Children's Hospital Group is drawing on international lessons and insights learned from similar programmes which provide evidence of the need for a significant integration, commissioning and transitioning programme, alongside the building of the new children's hospital and OPD Urgent Care centres and ICT programme.

5. Project Governance

The Children's Hospital Group is implementing the programme of work to bring the three hospitals together into a new single legal entity, reconfigure and consolidate paediatric services in Dublin, implement the ICT programme for the new facilities and support the successful commissioning and transitioning to the new children's hospital and paediatric OPD and Urgent Care centres.

The National Paediatric Hospital Development Board is focusing specifically on the capital project and Board members are in place with relevant architecture, planning, engineering and procurement experience and expertise to guide this very large-scale and complex capital project to completion.

Governance structures for the overall Children's Hospital Project and Programme (CHP&P) include a Children's Hospital Project and Programme Board and a Steering Group to oversee delivery of project. The NPHDB Project Director is a member of the Steering Group. The CHP&P Board, chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of Health, monitors progress against the agreed parameters for the programme in relation to timeline, scope and funding. The CHP&P Steering Group, chaired by the HSE Chief Operating Officer, is in place to direct the overall programme of work within the agreed parameters. The HSE COO may escalate issues to the Board if required.

6. Capital Project Progress this year

On 26 April 2017 the Government approved the investment required to enable the NPHDB to award the construction contracts for the building of the main children's hospital on the St James's Hospital campus and the two Paediatric Outpatients and Urgent Care Centres on the Tallaght and Connolly Hospital campuses.

The construction contract for the building of the main children's hospital and the contract for the Paediatric Outpatients and Urgent Care Centres were signed in August.

Site preparatory work was completed earlier this year and the construction phase of the project has now commenced with excavation works underway on the main site.

A Residents Project Monitoring Committee is in place for communication and dialogue and to address any residents' concerns and issues during the main hospital construction phase of the project.

6. Timeline

The Paediatric Outpatients & Urgent Care Centre at Connolly will open in 2019 followed by the second one at Tallaght in 2020 in advance of the opening of the main hospital in 2022.

7. Paediatric OPD Urgent Care Centres

The Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centres at Tallaght and Connolly Hospitals will improve geographic access to urgent care for children in the Greater Dublin Area. The two centres will support primary and community care through the provision of general community and paediatric clinics, including developmental paediatrics, multidisciplinary care for children with chronic stable conditions and other outpatient services. The centres will help to reduce Emergency Department and outpatient attendance at the new children's hospital on a campus shared with St James's.

The centres will provide services and environments of the same quality as those delivered in the new children's hospital, with staff rotating through the outpatient and urgent care centres and the main hospital.

Each Paediatric OPD and Urgent Care Centre will provide consultant-led urgent care, with 4-6 hour observation beds, appropriate diagnostics and secondary outpatient services including rapid access general paediatric clinics as well as child sexual abuse unit examination, observation and therapy rooms. Each centre is projected to deal with 25,000 urgent care and 15,000 outpatient attendances every year. The centres will be open during the known busiest daytime and evening hours and closed during the night when departments are at their quietest. It is anticipated that the Paediatric OPD and Urgent Care Centres at Tallaght and Connolly will open from 08.00 to 24.00, diagnostic services [from 08.00 to 20.00](#) and outpatient services [from 08.00 to 18.00](#).

8. Announcement of Name - Phoenix Children's Health

The Phoenix is a mythological symbol of renewal, community regeneration, vision, hope and inspiration. It is a fitting and apt name for a service which will have a profound impact on the lives of children and their families in Ireland for generations to come. The birth of new opportunities.

The name will replace Children's Hospital Group immediately but will be introduced on a phased basis to the existing hospitals. There is a proud heritage associated with the three children's hospitals and their names / brands – the change to the new name will happen over time as part of the integration programme and a brand management plan.