

Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare: Sláintecare Report

The Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare was established in June 2016 to devise cross-party agreement on a single long-term vision for health care and direction of health policy in Ireland.

A key aim is to bring services to the heart of communities, and make health care more accessible, especially to children.

On 30 May 2017 the Committee published Sláintecare, a comprehensive paper setting out recommendations on how best to re orientate the health service on a phased basis towards integrated, primary and community care, consistent with highest quality of patient safety, in as short a time-frame as possible.

The Children's Rights Alliance has summarised the commitments relating to children and young people for members below.

The full version of the Report can be found [here](#) which includes timelines and costings.

1. Expand Health And Well Being

The Committee made a number of recommendations to expand health and well being services for children and young people including:

- Health and Wellbeing budget should increase by 7.2% on the 2016 figure. This would result in a doubling of the health and wellbeing budget over a 10 year period. This would bring Ireland's health and well-being spend from the mid to a high end of the OECD average. The increase in Health and Wellbeing Budget would cost €233m over ten years.
- Resource and develop a universal child health and wellbeing service - €41m over first five years.
- Hire up to 900 more general nurses to work in the community with people leaving

the acute sector and older people. This would free up Public Health Nurses who have training in child health services to carry out child health work as part of the current Nurture-Infant Health and Wellbeing programme and the HSE's National Healthy Childhood Programme.

- Ensure that parents are supported to meet the emotional development needs of their children as well as their physical health needs through supporting the development of the parent-child relationship.
- Strengthen mechanisms for the full implementation of Healthy Ireland including:
 - Leadership from the Taoiseach;
 - Implementation across government and the health system;
 - Taking population health and wellness into account in all workings of the government, possibly through Health Impact Assessments; and
 - The prompt development and publication of an Outcomes Framework for Healthy Ireland.
- The urgent publication of specific timelines and measurable goals and outcomes framework for Healthy Ireland and the adequate resourcing of the work needed to carry it out.
- That the role of Minister of State for Health Promotion should be retained in future Governments.
- Integrate an Infant Mental Health approach into the Primary Care Child Health and Wellbeing service.
- Child health and wellbeing services including parenting supports during pregnancy and in the early years of the child's life.

2. Primary Care Expansion

The Committee made a number of recommendations to expand primary care services in communities to children and young people including:

- Counselling in primary care to be extended.
- Develop public psychology services in primary care at a cost of the order of €5m over two years to get this service up and running. This would fund 114 assistant psychologists, 20 child psychologists and allow for the development of a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) online resource.
- It is proposed to extend GP care and primary care services without charge to an additional 500,000 people each year on the basis of income. There will need to be a corresponding phased increase in capacity of general practice to deliver this. A new GP contract and salaried GPs will facilitate this. Cost: €455 million over five years.
- Introducing Universal primary care will cost €265.6 million over first five years of the plan.

3. Social Care Expansion

- Additional services for people with disabilities - €290 million over ten years.

4. Mental Healthcare

The Committee made a number of recommendations to expand mental health services for children and young people including:

- Adequately staff Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams. Cost: €45.7 million, delivered by year five.
- Adequately staff Child and Adolescent Liaison. Cost: €4million, delivered by year five.

5. Dentistry Expansion

- Reinstatement budget to Dental Treatment Services Scheme to pre-economic crisis levels. Cost: €17 million in year one.
- Develop a universal package of dental care.

6. Legislation

- Legislate for the National Health Fund and new funding mechanisms for the transitional funding, legacy funding and package expansion components, as required.
 - Enact the Irish (Sláinte) Health Act which will provide the legislative basis for a universal entitlement to a broad package of health and social care for everyone living in Ireland with maximum waiting times and a Cárta Sláinte. A Cárta Sláinte will ensure access to all publicly funded health and social care services including:
 - GPs, public health nurses, primary care, addiction services, diagnostics, hospital care, home care, long term care and palliative care;
 - Public health/population health services, mental health services, maternity care, services for people with disabilities, access to medication, aids and appliances; and
 - Dental, eye and ear services
 - Introducing legislation by Spring 2018 for the following waiting time policies, to be implemented on a phased basis by 2023.
 - No-one should wait more than 12 weeks for an inpatient procedure, 10 weeks for an outpatient appointment and ten days for a diagnostic test. Hospitals that breach guarantees are held accountable, through a range of effective measures including, ultimately, sanctions on senior staff, but not to the detriment of healthcare deliver.
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