

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department of Health

VASECTOMY SERVICES

Published at 9.30 am on Wednesday 10 April 2024.

Mr Swann (The Minister of Health): I wish to inform Members of my decision to transfer vasectomy services from secondary care to primary care.

This will involve vasectomies being provided by GPs, with the service funded through the transfer of funds from Health and Social Care Trust budgets. Importantly, the service and the funds will be transferred on a permanent basis.

The change will take effect immediately, with a transition phase operating in 2024/25. From 2025/26 onwards, primary care will be the sole provider of health service vasectomy services. In the region of £450k-£500k per year will be transferred into primary care.

My decision is firmly in line with the important principle of providing the right care in the right place and at the right time.

It will ensure a more localised service for patients and I am confident it will result in hundreds more procedures being carried out in the first year alone.

This is a positive example of services being relocated for the benefit of patients – and with lower costs per procedure.

It demonstrates the benefits of planned change in health care.

Scalpel-free vasectomies have been provided by GPs in recent years through the primary care elective care service. Funding, however, had been on a non-recurrent basis and was not provided for the second half of 2023/24 due to health service budgetary pressures. Vasectomy in secondary care is currently at low levels, resulting in around 1000 patients currently waiting for the procedure - reflecting the need for secondary care to focus attention on more complex and acute needs.

I have signalled my intention as Minister to support primary care, which is a critically important foundation for the entire health and social care system.

I believe the decision I am announcing today will be welcomed by the primary care sector.