

# Changing smiles: one small step at a time

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Sláinte Leanaí Éireann



Children's Health Ireland

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*“You’ve got to think about big things while you’re doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction”*

Alvin Toffler

American writer & businessman

1928 - 2016



# Background to CNSp post:



- January 2011 – joined the Cleft MDT
- April 2019 - recognized as a specialist post by ONMSD
- Clinical, supportive, consultative & counselling role: parents, children & HCPs
- Specific emphasis on: Cleft information provision
  - Early diagnosis & early referral
  - Feeding support / growth monitoring
  - Preparation for surgery
  - Health promotion aspects (MECC philosophy)

# What is a Cleft? 1:700 incidence (Mossey et al. 2009)

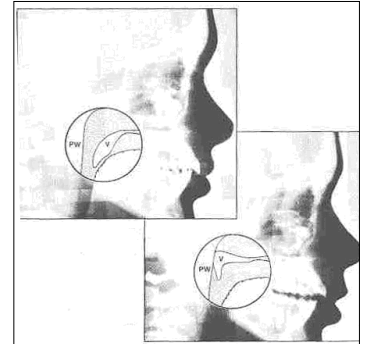
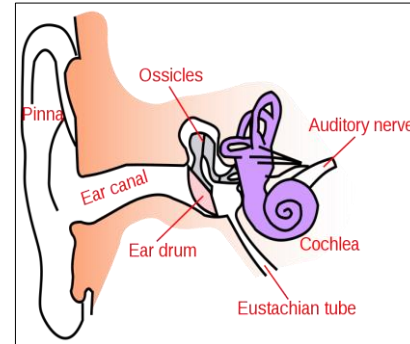
- Failure of fusion of the lip +/- palate
- during embryology (weeks 4-10).
- Timing of interruption dictates severity.
- Severity of cleft  
(+ any additional co-morbidities)  
determines the:

- a) Feeding management
- b) Surgical pathway



# Effects of cleft lip +/- palate:

- Appearance
- Feeding
- Dentition
- Facial Growth
- Hearing
- Speech & Communication Development

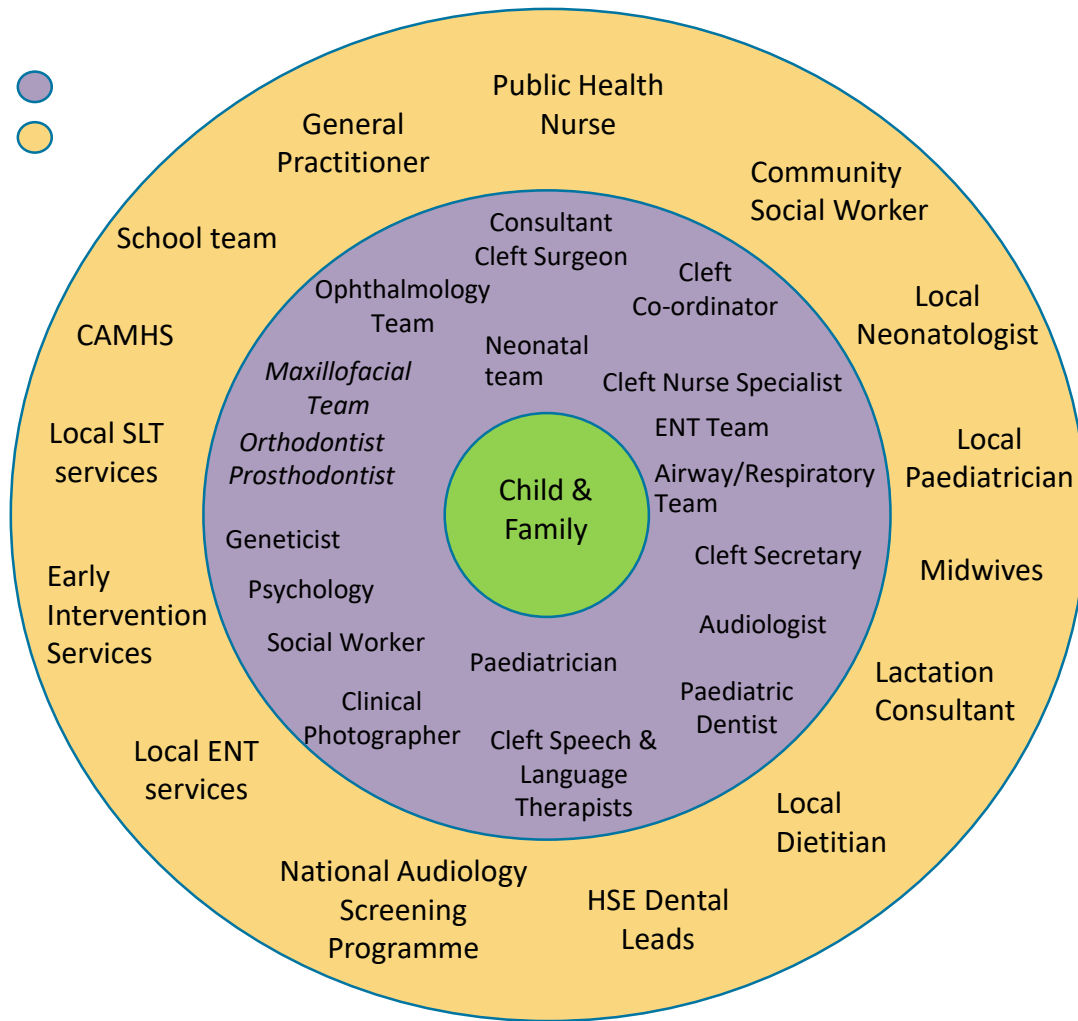


***“Journey/lifetime of care”***

# Irish Cleft Teams



CHI Services ●  
 Local Services ●



# Cleft Lip & Palate Care Pathway (CHI Temple St. cohort)

Timing	Diagnosis	Surgery	Speech & Language	Hearing	Dental	Orthodontic	Cleft Clinic Schedule
<b>Birth - 1yr</b>	Cleft type  Airway & Feeding assessments  ? diagnosis co-morbidities (referrals to dietetics, genetics, eye )	Lip & vomer repair @ 3mths (UCLP) Lip adhesion & vomer @ 3mths & 6mths (BCLP as a 2-staged procedure) Lip repair @ 6mths (ICL)  Palate repair @ 9mths (ICP, UCLP) Palate repair @12mths (BCLP)	Referral to community SLT services at initial cleft clinic visit (palate involvement cohort only)  Communication @ 9-12mths during combined clinic visit	National Neonatal Screening Programme  All palate involvement listed for targeted follow up 9-12mths	All Referred to local HSE services at initial cleft clinic visit  BCLP: 1yr hospital R/V		Pre-op clinic 10 days pre surgery  Post-op clinic review 3mths after surgery
<b>18 months</b>	Local GP, community, Paediatrician PRN		Speech assessment @ Hub Centre		Local services		Review if required
<b>3-3.5 years</b>			✓	✓ local or Temple St	✓		✓ full MDT
<b>4 -15 years (5yr &amp; 10yr Audits)</b>	Assessment PRN for palate function	Speech Surgery if required  Bone graft (ABG) if required	✓	✓ local or Temple St	✓	✓ Clinics >7yrs of age – St. James' Hospital	✓
<b>15-16years</b>			✓	✓ Local PRN	✓	✓ St. James' Hospital	Final Discharge/ Transition
<b>18+years</b>		Orthognathic Dental Reconstruction Final Revision	✓ PRN				Adult Services



# Small steps: cleft information provision

## CNSp role influencing change:

- Families: Advice leaflets
  - CNSp contactable by phone/email
  - CNSp consultations
- Healthcare professionals:
  - website information
  - Cleft sessions for student nurses/midwives at 3<sup>rd</sup> level colleges
  - CNSp liaison letters





New website:  
launched March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021

[www.cleftcareireland.ie](http://www.cleftcareireland.ie)

# Small steps: early diagnosis & referral

## CNSp role influencing change:

- Referral template on website
- Links with maternity hospital sites
- Cleft sessions to Midwives (TCD) and Examination of the Newborn Module (UCD)
- Audits: time of diagnosis / referral



# Timing of Diagnosis:

- Antenatal scan (if there is lip involvement)
- Birth
- Examination of the Newborn



# Dublin Cleft Centre: time of diagnosis

Year of birth	20/40 scan diagnosis
2020	85%
2019	84%
2018	79%
2017	61%
2016	65%
2015	74%
2014	57%

Diagnosis of cleft palate **with** lip involvement

Year of Birth	<24hrs of birth	24-72hrs of age	>72hrs of age
2020	78%	11%	11%
2019	75%	17%	8%
2018	86%	0	14%
2017	80%	9%	11%
2016	75%	14%	11%
2015	77%	7%	16%
2014	69%	20%	11%

Diagnosis of cleft palate **without** lip involvement



Images: rcpch.ac.uk



2014 Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health published NICE accredited evidenced-based guidelines for palatal examination ([www.rcpch.ac.uk](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk))



# Small steps: feeding support / growth monitoring

## CNSp role influencing change:

- Website information leaflets
- CNSp feeding assessments
- Phone support
- Cleft sessions student midwives (TCD), Breast Feeding & Lactation Support Certificate (UCD)
- Liaison with public health nurses (GPs, Neonatologists, Paediatricians)



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# Small steps: preparation for surgery

## CNSp role influencing change:

- Nurse-led pre-op preparation clinics
- Advice leaflets for parents
- Website resources
- Analgesia audits





# Small steps: Health Promotion

## CNSp role influencing change:

- Make Every Contact Count (MECC)
- Breast feeding/breast milk feeding promotion (audits)
- Dental hygiene (1<sup>st</sup> year birthday packs)
- Healthy eating
- Vaccination advice
- 5 year cleft audit clinic pack



Dental Health Foundation



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# SMALL steps = BIG results:



## Children & families

- Supported parents & families
- Children confident in their appearance (lip scar, jaw & teeth alignment)
- Good quality speech
- Healthy teeth
- Minimal hospitalisations, complications & school absences

## Healthcare professionals

- Early diagnosis and early referral to cleft team
- Increased awareness of cleft management
- Improved communication & collaboration between hospital and community
- Minimisation of contradictory advice

# Thank you for listening😊



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