

11th January 2013

IAEM confirms presence of ongoing infrastructure deficits in Irish Emergency Departments especially in those seeing both child and adult patients

The [Irish Independent \(9th January 2013\)](#) legitimately raises concerns about the inadequate facilities available to children attending Irish hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) which treat both adults and children, concerns which the Irish Association for Emergency Medicine has highlighted for many years. The Independent's story is based on a report of site visits carried out on behalf of the HSE in 2012.

For many years the international standard has been to have audiovisual separation of children and adults in EDs seeing both child and adult patients. Indeed this has been the norm in our nearest neighbour (the UK) for many years. Among its many observations, the 2007 [Report of the Emergency Department Taskforce](#) noted that the infrastructure of the majority of EDs it visited was 'not fit for purpose' and urged early rectification of these deficits. In its document [Standards for Emergency Medicine Design and Specification for Ireland](#) published in September 2007, IAEM mandated audiovisual separation and the [Report of the National Emergency Medicine Programme](#) published in June 2012 reiterates this requirement. However even where EDs have been redeveloped or upgraded in recent years, the funding provided has been inadequate to ensure infrastructure which would be regarded as appropriate for the 21st century.

At present, there continues to be a significant number of major EDs which have very serious infrastructural deficits and in particular have no facilities to ensure that adults and children are separated in the way they should. This means that small children, their siblings and parents are often exposed to environments that are inappropriate and often frightening. This is no longer acceptable in 2013.

IAEM calls on the Department of Health and HSE to devise a national standard for ED design and infrastructure, based on an update of the 2007 IAEM Standards, and to prioritise the essential capital funding within the HSE budget to ensure that all Ireland's EDs meet these basic standards.

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