

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Office of Head of Primary Care
HSE Community Services Building
Rathass
Tralee
Co. Kerry
V92 YA25

Tel: 066-7184516

Email: Teresa.ODonovan2@hse.ie

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Michael McGrath, TD
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 49596/19

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adolescents in Cork city and county on a waiting list for orthodontic assessment and treatment respectively; the length of time they have been waiting; the number of consultants providing such services in the location; the vacancies in this regard; the steps being taken to reduce the waiting lists; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy McGrath

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The primary goal of orthodontics is to improve the appearance and function of misaligned or crooked teeth. The HSE provides free orthodontic treatment for children with the most severe orthodontic problems. The criteria used to decide whether a child qualifies for treatment in the HSE is determined by nationally agreed eligibility guidelines based on an international grading system, Index of Orthodontic Treatment Need (IOTN). To ensure the resources available in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) are used in the most appropriate way to meet the presenting needs, all referrals for the service are triaged and given a priority rating.

Children who meet the criteria to be placed on the Priority Waiting List, e.g., cleft palate, impacted teeth, etc, are seen within one month to a year. Children who meet the criteria to be placed on the Functional Waiting List are generally seen within 18 to 24 months and children who meet the criteria to be placed on the Routine Fixed Waiting List are usually seen within 4 years. Timelines for individual children may vary as emergency cases will occur and will need priority so any estimation given may not be accurate.

The Orthodontic Services in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are currently provided by two Consultant Orthodontists. One Consultant Orthodontist covers South Lee and West Cork and the other covers North Lee and Kerry. There is also a Service Level Agreement with UCC to provide Orthodontic Service for the North Cork area and this Consultant Orthodontist is based at Cork University Dental School and Hospital. There are no vacant Consultant Orthodontic Posts in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare at present.

The HSE's National Service Plan for 2019 sets out the following targets for orthodontic assessment and treatment. The targets for Cork Kerry Community Healthcare orthodontic services are;

- 75% of patient referrals seen for assessment within 6 months

- 99% of patients to have commenced treatment within 4 years

At the end of Quarter 3 2019, of those on the Orthodontic treatment waiting list following an Orthodontic assessment in Cork Kerry Community Health Care, 44% are waiting less than a year and a total of 92% are waiting less than 3 years with under 8% waiting in excess of three years. To ensure the available resources is used in the most appropriate way all referrals are triaged by the Consultant Orthodontists in the department. Through this process the most severe cases are prioritised and seen first.

As advised in response to your previous representations on this matter, CKCH is looking at a range of service improvements including the introduction of a centralised wait list for the orthodontic department. The introduction of this wait list will allow the CHO's funded resources be targeted at this wait list on a prioritised basis, to improve equity of access to orthodontic treatment across the CHO. A new ICT system (Orthotrak) has now been introduced to support this initiative and a breakdown of the numbers of children and adolescent accessing Orthodontic assessment and treatment in CKCH from this system at the end of Quarter 3 is set out hereunder.

Assessment waiting times – Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

Number of Orthodontic patients waiting for an assessment following referral:

Wait band:	1-6 Months	720
	7-12 Months	581
	13-12 Months	192
	> 2 years	3
	Total	1,496


Treatment Waiting List – Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

Total number waiting to commence treatment following assessment – Grade 4 (Routine) & Grade 5 (Functional)	Q3 2019
wait band 1-6 months	439
wait band 7-12 months	515
wait band 13-24 months	679
wait band 25-36 months	375
wait band 37-48 months	161
wait band over 4 years (>48 months)	1
Total	2,170

Due to an IT issue, it is currently not possible to get a breakdown of the figures for the assessment and treatment waiting times for each area. These figures are an overall total for the Cork Kerry Community Healthcare.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa O' Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare