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22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

Donnchadh O' Laoghaire T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 43841/20**

**"To ask the Minister for Health if he will address a matter in relation to unfilled dentist vacancies (details supplied)."**

**Details Supplied: If it is correct, that there are currently three dentist vacancies unfilled in the school dental service in Cork, and that another dentist was redeployed during Covid, and not replaced, leading to a situation of the dental service being down four dentists."**

Dear Deputy O'Laoghaire

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.

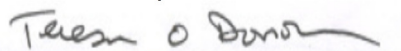
The Primary Care Dental services team provides Dental treatment services to eligible children, medical card holders, special needs clients and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Co. Cork. Children under 16 years of age are treated in HSE dental clinics and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the Health Services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). Cork Kerry Primary Care Dental Service provides a school screening dental service which targets pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

There have been a number of retirements, statutory leave and transfers of staff in Cork Dental Services in recent years and a recruitment process had commenced to fill these vacant posts. However, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 disrupted this recruitment process and interviews have now been scheduled by the National Recruitment Service for early January 2021.

From March to June due to the Covid-19 pandemic Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) had suspended all services with the exception of those defined as critical. From June, CKCH has been working to gradually resume services in the context of a significant portion of staff, including dental staff, being re-deployed to Covid-19 services. A national recruitment campaign was initiated in September 2020 to achieve a bespoke sustainable workforce in Covid services. The recruitment of Community Swabbing staff has and will continue to support the return of staff to their substantive roles.

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**