



13 August 2020

Deputy Martin Kenny
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 20347/20

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adults on the dental appointment waiting list in CHO1 and CHO2; the average waiting times for appointments; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kenny,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Questions which have been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

Following engagement with Community HealthCare Organisation (CHO) 1 and CHO 2, below is the current position;

HSE Dental services for adults are provided through the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). Treatment is provided by general dental practitioners that hold contracts with the HSE. Access to treatment is through contact with a contracted local dentist. The HSE doesn't hold waiting lists for dental treatment for adult medical card holders accessing services through the DTSS. However, some adults with special care needs attend the HSE Dental Services. The returns below take account of some of those adults.

CHO 1

	No of Children & Adults on Dental Appointment Waiting List	Average Waiting Times
Donegal	5544	Up to 26 weeks
Sligo, Leitrim & West Cavan	5553	Up to 26 weeks
Cavan Monaghan	2641	Up to 12 weeks

CHO 2

	Total
No. of Children on Dental Appointment Waiting List:	13,500
No. of Adults on Dental Appointment Waiting List:	400
Average time for appointment	Currently Operating emergency service <u>only</u> since March 2020. Routine service expected to return in September 2020

Access to dental services was restricted to urgent /emergency treatment under the terms of Statutory Instrument 121/2020 (28th March 2020 -18th May 2020). An emergency dental service was maintained in all HSE service areas throughout this time, which included remote consultation through telephone triage as well as clinical attendance for treatment.

During that time, and since, many HSE dental staff have been redeployed to testing and tracing as part of the HSE's response to the pandemic.

Elective Dental Services have been gradually resuming. All service locations are implementing social distancing and other organisational measures as well as infection prevention and control guidance from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre that has been updated during the pandemic. Some of these measures mean that the usual throughput of patients is reduced at the start of the resumption, but this is expected to improve over time. HSE dental staff members have been provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the pandemic.

In locations where dental services share waiting areas and other facilities, all services are working together to ensure that services are delivered safely and effectively. As part of their resumption plan, each dental area is restarting their screening and treatment service for children. Clinicians have reviewed the records of patients that were under treatment at the time when services were phased down. Priority for early appointments has been given to patients that need to be seen urgently, and following up where necessary on cases that had emergency treatment during the restricted access period.

Full assessment of the impact on waiting lists of the restricted access period, reduced throughput on resumption, and the ongoing commitment to testing on the backlog in service provision is being undertaken. Reducing waiting times is a key priority for the HSE, while at all times ensuring that services implement the organisational and preventive measures required to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but if you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



Joseph Green
AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations