



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an tUas. Pat Bennett,
Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte
Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú, An Mhí
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Oifig
Cheantair, Bóthar Ardáin, An Tulach
Mhór, Co. Uíbh Fhailí.

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26th August, 2020

Mr. Johnny Guirke T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: Parliamentary Question – 20688/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adults on the orthodontic waiting lists in counties Meath and Westmeath by county; the average waiting times for appointments; the number waiting more than six months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Johnny Guirke

Dear Deputy Guirke,

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. I have examined the matter and please find below details of the number of Adults and Children from County Meath and Westmeath on the Orthodontic Waiting List as at 31st July 2020 by the year they were placed on the waiting list and by category.

Meath

Year placed on Waiting List	Adults Cat 4	Adults Cat 5	Children Cat 4	Children Cat 5	Total
2014	0	0	3	0	3
2015	0	0	21	1	22
2016	0	0	54	6	60
2017	2	0	89	19	110
2018	0	0	87	96	183
2019	0	0	79	89	168
2020	0	0	9	13	22
	2	0	342	224	568

Westmeath

Year placed on Waiting List	Adults Cat 4	Adults Cat 5	Children Cat 4	Children Cat 5	Total
2010	6	0	0	0	6
2011	21	0	0	0	21
2012	16	0	0	0	16
2013	43	1	2	2	48
2014	43	0	8	1	52
2015	60	3	21	9	93
2016	4	1	4	18	27
2017	3	0	60	22	85
2018	2	0	58	45	105
2019	1	0	64	85	150
2020	0	0	15	27	42
	199	5	232	209	645

Meath

There are currently **568** people on the orthodontic waiting list from Co Meath, **2** are 18 years of age or over and **566** are under 18 as at 31st July 2020. All of the above are waiting more than six months. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, normal services ceased mid-March 2020 and both clinical and administrative staff were redeployed to the community Covid-19 testing centres. Since then, only patients experiencing problems with their orthodontic appliance have been seen in emergency clinics.

The orthodontic waiting list is prioritised based on clinical need alone. Category 5 cases are considered to have a high clinical need and are prioritised for treatment. Category 4 cases are not considered to have a high clinical need and therefore have a longer waiting time for treatment. Unfortunately due to the current situation it is not possible to give average waiting times.

Westmeath

There are currently **645** persons on the waiting list from Co. Westmeath, **204** are over 18 and **441** are under 18 as at 31st July 2020. All of the above are waiting more than six months due to the current Covid-19 situation as normal services ceased in early March 2020. Since then only person who are in active treatment have been seen in Emergency Clinics.

The above table also illustrates the length of time that persons have ben waiting i.e 6 persons on the waiting list since 2010, 21 since 2011 etc.

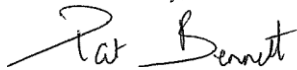
There is one Orthodontic waiting list for persons in the Midlands covering the four counties of Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Longford. Person on the waiting list are prioritised on the basis of their clinical need. Persons in Category 5 are considered to have a high clinical need and are prioritised for services. Person in Category 4 are not considered to have a high clinical need and generally will have a longer wait for services. This is due to the long standing deficit between the demand for services and the availability of trained staff. In the interim persons in Category 4 may qualify for services within the EU cross border directive the details of which can be found on www.hse.ie/crossborderdirective or by telephone 056 7784546. Many persons from Westmeath have availed of this initiative.

The HSE Midlands area has been very active in trying to address the longstanding deficit between the demand for services and the availability of trained staff. The HSE Midlands area recently advertised for an additional Specialist Orthodontist and the successful candidate has indicated that they will commence in November 2020. Plans to recruit a Consultant Orthodontist are also at an advanced stage. It is anticipated that the addition of these resources to meet the demand for services will contribute greatly to a reduction in waiting times for services.

Please note that persons will remain on the HSE waiting list for services until such a time as they are offered an appointment or alternatively inform the HSE that they no longer wish to avail of the HSE orthodontic services.

I trust the above is in order and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "B".

Pat Bennett
Chief Officer CHO Area 8