



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig um Cheannasaí Seirbhíse do Chúram Priomhúil  
Cúram Sláinte Phobail FSS an Mheán Iarthair  
Ascaill Bhaile Choimín,  
Páirc Gnó an Ráithín, Ráithín  
Luimneach  
Teil: 061 483722

Office of the Head of Service for Primary Care  
HSE Mid West Community Healthcare  
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Tel: 061 483722

6<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**Deputy Violet – Anne Wynne**  
**Leinster House**  
**Kildare St**  
**Dublin 2**

**Re: PQ Ref 20876/26 – Orthodontic waiting lists in County Clare**

Dear Deputy Wynne,

I refer to your Parliamentary Question in relation to the above *“To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adults on the orthodontic waiting lists in County Clare; the average waiting times for appointments; the number waiting more than six months; and if he will make a statement on the matter”*

There are currently 29 patients from County Clare on the orthodontic assessment waiting list. 12 of these patients have been waiting more than 6 months for assessment. Under normal circumstances, 100% of patients are seen for assessment within 6 months of referral, with 75% being seen for assessment within 3 months of referral. Unfortunately, the restrictions on clinical activity which were imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic have necessitated the postponement of our quarterly assessment clinics and have increased the waiting time for assessment.

There are currently 482 patients from County Clare on the treatment waiting list. 431 of these patients have been waiting more than 6 months for treatment. The average waiting time from date of orthodontic assessment to the commencement of treatment is 4 years. In this regard, orthodontics differs from other clinical disciplines in that a course of treatment takes, on average, 18 to 24 months to complete. Consequently, the speed at which an individual patient is called for the commencement of treatment is not merely a function of their chronological position on a waiting list but rather, is dependent on the number of patients in active treatment at any given time, the complexity of such cases and, as a corollary, the time taken to complete treatment.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the back log of patients in active treatment requiring follow up appointments, the necessity for social distancing and safe patient flow within the orthodontic department and the demands of increased infection prevention protocols will impose further limitations on the speed at which patients can be called from our waiting lists.

I trust this information addresses the issues raised in your representation.

Yours sincerely,

**Carmel McLaughlin**  
**General Manager – Primary Care**