



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig NaisuintaSlainte Beil,
Fedhmeannacht na Seirbhíse
Sláinte,
31-33 Sráid Caitriona,
Luimneach.

National Oral Health Office,
Health Service Executive,
31-33 Catherine St.,
Limerick.

**Kathleen Funchion, TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

17th July 2020

PQ: 13212/20

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if the HSE will outsource dental appointments for children in order that waiting times to have urgent dental work undertaken can be significantly reduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Kathleen Funchion

Dear Deputy Funchion,

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

Dental services for children are provided by the HSE under the Health Act 1970 and subsequent legislation. Almost one million children aged up to and including 15 years are eligible for HSE Dental Services. The services include emergency care for the relief of pain and infection on a same day/following day basis at HSE Dental Clinics, and targeted preventive and treatment services for children. Children in the targeted age groups are typically in 1st/2nd Class and 6th Class, with some 4th Class children being seen in some parts of the country. Some children receive treatment from the HSE Dental service in hospital under general anaesthetic.

From 28th March 2020, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, dental services were restricted to urgent and emergency treatment in line with Statutory Instrument 121/2020. With effect from 18th May 2020, the resumption of elective dental procedures was enabled by Statutory Instrument 174/2020. Elective Dental Services are gradually resuming having been phased down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All service locations are implementing social distancing and other organisational measures as well as infection prevention and control guidance 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. 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 planning, each dental area will be restarting their screening and treatment service for children. Clinicians are reviewing the records of all patients that were under treatment at the time when services were phased down. Priority for early appointments will be given to patients that need to be seen urgently.

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