



13 March 2020

Deputy Sean Fleming
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 2692/20

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on the orthodontic waiting list by region at the end of 2018; the number waiting more than 2, between 2 and 4 and more than 4 years on the treatment waiting list, respectively; the total number on the list; the further action he will take to have persons waiting longest in excess of 4 years dealt with immediately; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Fleming,

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

It is important to note the following:

- i. Orthodontic treatment with the HSE Orthodontic Service is limited to those children with the most severe and complex orthodontic treatment needs. A Modified Index of Treatment Needs (Modified IOTN) system is used to determine if a child can be accepted for treatment.
- ii. Access to HSE Orthodontics is through a referral process that starts in the HSE Dental Service, usually when the child is in 6th Class. If a child is identified as having a treatment need that may qualify through the Modified IOTN system, then s/he will be referred for an Orthodontic Assessment with the HSE's Regional Orthodontic Department. If the treatment need meets the criteria under the Modified IOTN, the child will then be placed on a waiting list for treatment. There are a number of categories within the system, and these are used to prioritise care. These waiting lists (orthodontic assessment list, orthodontic treatment list) are managed by the HSE's Regional Orthodontic service.

The question requested details on the number of persons on the orthodontic waiting list by region at the end of 2018 which is outlined below in Table 1.

Table 1 KPI Data Q4 2018

	In Active Treatment	Numbers waiting for treatment						
		Waiting < 2 years	Waiting 2-4 years	Waiting > 4 years	Totals	Grade 4	Grade 5	Totals
Former East Coast (Loughlinstown)	1109	573	383	54	1010	489	521	1010
Former South West (St James's)	2559	1228	1145	95	2468	1099	1369	2468
Midlands	851	1201	566	370	2137	1508	629	2137
DNE	3787	1751	788	344	2883	1697	1186	2883
South	2740	1513	649	5	2167	981	1186	2167
South East	1157	1412	1385	253	3050	1308	1742	3050
Mid Western	1581	792	873	49	1714	780	934	1714
North West	1190	488	76	0	564	252	312	564
Western	2395	1137	1052	0	2189	1341	848	2189
Totals	17369	10095	6917	1170	18182	9455	8727	18182

Details of numbers of patients on assessment waiting lists, those in active treatment, and those on treatment waiting lists **for end of Q4 2019** are given also below and in Appendix 1.

Assessments

At the end of 2019, 10,202 children were awaiting assessment by the regional orthodontic departments, 1,859 for 0-6 months, 8,343 between 7-12 months. Full details for each regional department are given in the Appendix.

Numbers in treatment

At the end of 2019, there were 16,994 patients in active treatment for malocclusions in categories 4 and 5. An additional 270 patients were placed on the waiting list initiative (an initiative to deal with long waiting times for access to orthodontic treatment) through procurement. Full details for each regional department are given in the Appendix.

Numbers waiting for treatment

At the end of 2019, there were 19,216 patients waiting for orthodontic treatment, (10,882 in Category 4, (8,334 in Category 5). Full details for each regional department are given in the Appendix.

Analysis

Patients face huge difficulties in accessing orthodontic treatment with the HSE. These difficulties are expressed through the very high numbers waiting for assessment, and in both the numbers waiting for treatment and the length of time waiting for treatment. The predominant causative factor is lack of treatment capacity in the service.

Potential actions to reduce waiting times and numbers waiting

There are three approaches available that can impact on waiting times:

1. Increase capacity through recruitment of additional Consultant Orthodontist (3 vacant posts) and Specialist Orthodontists
2. Increase capacity through skill-mix improvements by recruiting of Orthodontic Therapists (successful pilot programme already completed and evaluated).
3. Outsourcing of treatment.

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



Appendix 1: Orthodontic Service KPI Data Q4 2019

Table 1: Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Category 4

Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Category 4						
1-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	37-48 months	Over 4 years	Total
1108	1334	2376	2520	1870	1674	10,882

Table 2: Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Category 5

Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Category 5						
1-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	37-48 months	Over 4 years	Total
1083	1466	2684	1677	986	438	8,334

Table 3: Number of patients placed on treatment waiting list Category 4 per area and wait band

Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Category 4, end 2019							
Area	1-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	37-48 months	Over 4 years	TOTAL
DML Former East Coast	60	53	107	180	92	0	492
DML Simms	68	45	205	281	308	20	927
Midlands	70	44	167	216	161	855	1513
DNE	83	200	440	437	327	438	1925
South	470	574	694	527	283	0	2548
South East	108	114	227	287	371	268	1375
Mid-Western	61	95	164	188	180	93	781
North West	46	47	77	76	28	0	274
West	142	162	295	328	120	0	1047
TOTAL	1108	1334	2376	2520	1870	1674	10,882

Table 4: Number of patients on the treatment waiting list Grade 5 per area and wait band

Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Grade 5, end 2019							
Area	1-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	37-48 months	Over 4 years	TOTAL
DML/East Coast	117	70	126	167	36	36	552
DML Simms	104	233	312	251	292	35	1227
Midlands	88	92	163	93	64	55	555
DNE	89	281	589	317	67	65	1408
South	121*	293*	553*	219*	0	0	1186
South East	148	189	438	377	310	186	1648
Mid-West	74	120	229	227	191	61	902
North West	143	73	100	-	-	-	316
West	199	115	174	26	26	-	540
TOTAL	1083	1466	2684	1677	986	438	8334

* Number of Patients on treatment waiting list Grade 5 for the South Regional Orthodontic Department is not available for 2019. Numbers shown represent data as at Q4 2018.

Table 5: Number of patients waiting for assessment per area and wait band

Number of Patients waiting for orthodontic assessment, end 2019		
Area	0 – 6 months waiting time	7 – 12 months waiting time
DML – Former East Coast Loughlinstown	657	892
DML Simms	198	569
Midlands	136	297
DNE	209	1018
South	282	1939
South East	106	1381
Mid-Western	183	174
North West	40	437
West	48	1636
TOTAL	1859	8343

Table 6: Number of patients in active treatment Grade 4 and 5

Number of Patients in Active Treatment Grade 4 and 5, end 2019	
DML, Former East Coast (Loughlinstown)	1,164
DML, Former South West (Simms)	2,467
Midlands	772
DNE	3,877
South	2,847
South East	1,158
Mid-Western	1,494
North West	813
Western	2,402
Total	16,994