



16 December 2021

**Deputy Neasa Hourigan
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 18534/21: To ask the Minister for Health when the Bearn and Richmond report presented to the HSE in February 2015 into allegations that children were damaged in the public orthodontic service will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

In 2015 the HSE received a review report that it had commissioned, following receipt of a statement of concern in relation to an orthodontic service serving the Greater Dublin Area between 1999 and 2002. This original review was, in effect, a scoping report commissioned to advise the HSE on what actions should be taken to determine if there was a risk of harm to patients in this case.

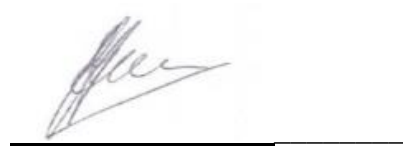
The HSE cannot as a matter of course commit to the publication or otherwise of such reports prior to their completion, as the benefits of publication must be balanced with the requirement for patient confidentiality, and our obligation to afford natural justice to all other parties concerned.

The original review report, of 2015, did not include a review of any patient records for the period and so, understandably, reliable conclusions could not be drawn at the time with respect to potential patient harm.

Since receipt of the 2015 report the HSE has initiated a comprehensive audit of over 7,500 patient files available from that period. Due to the scale of the audit and the requirements for specialist staff and resources the timeline has been protracted. While it is regrettable that this work has taken so long to progress, the priority of the HSE at all times has been for a robust audit on which to base any further action required. The audit and clinical review of relevant patient files from the period have been completed. As a result of this complex and large scale audit, it was found that 16 out of over 7,500 records reviewed by clinicians did not include a documented end point to the patient's treatment with braces. As a precaution, we have written to the patients concerned to discuss our findings with them and offer a dental review should this be necessary.

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

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Green', is positioned above a solid black horizontal line.

Joseph Green
AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations