

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Office of Head of Primary Care
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10th February 2021

Colm Burke T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 4381/21

“To ask the Minister for Health the position regarding the provision of orthodontic treatment in County Cork; his views on whether due to the long delay in getting access to this type of treatment that those who are on the waiting list could attend for the treatment privately and receive reimbursement from the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Burke,

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.

The primary goal of the orthodontic service is to improve the appearance and function of misaligned or crooked teeth, with free orthodontic treatment being provided to children with the most severe orthodontic problems. Qualification for treatment is determined by nationally agreed eligibility guidelines based on an international grading system (IOTN). All referrals for the service are triaged and given a priority rating by the clinical team.

As you are aware the health service is currently exceptionally challenged in responding to the third wave of the Covid- 19 pandemic. All available staff are currently deployed to deliver emergency and essential services such as testing, vaccination, supporting residential services and hospital discharge and hospital avoidance. Once services resume, adherence to infection prevention control measures, to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19, will result in fewer treatments being provided per day. I appreciate the difficulties this creates for those waiting for a service and I acknowledge their continued patience and understanding.

Prior to the pandemic, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) had plans to deliver a range of service improvements including the introduction of a centralised wait list to improve equity of access across the CHO and the recruitment of a Consultant Orthodontist for Kerry. While the demand for the service continued to grow, it was hoped that these measures would help to reduce the overall waiting time. These service improvement plans will be reinvigorated during 2021. It is hoped that this, along with treatment initiatives being finalised by the National Oral Health Office, will have a positive impact on the public orthodontic wait lists across CKCH. The national treatment initiatives are likely to include the provision of orthodontic treatment by private practitioners. The HSE is obliged to adhere to the national financial regulations with regard to the procurement of such services. Once the quantum of

private provision is identified the existing waiting lists will be reviewed to identify the cohort on the waiting list most appropriate to receive treatment from a private provider.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Teresa O'Donovan", written over a horizontal line.

Teresa O' Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare