



29 March 2021

**Deputy Roisin Shortall
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 14814/21 To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who have had dental treatments provided by the HSE public dental service between March 2020 and March 2021; and the way in which this compares with the same period in the three preceding years.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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.

Appendix 1 details latest available KPI data (end Q4 2020) for the number of children in primary school target groups attending for scheduled assessment in the HSE Dental Service (2017-2020).

Access to dental services was restricted to urgent /emergency treatment under the terms of Statutory Instrument 121/2020 (28th March 2020 -18th May 2020). An emergency dental service was maintained in all HSE service areas throughout this time, which included remote consultation through telephone triage as well as clinical attendance for treatment.

During that time, and since, many HSE dental staff have been redeployed to testing and tracing as part of the HSE's response to the pandemic.

Elective Dental Services have been gradually resuming. All service locations are implementing social distancing and other organisational measures as well as infection prevention and control guidance from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre 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. HSE dental staff members have been provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the pandemic.

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 plan, each dental area has restarted their screening and treatment service for children. Clinicians have reviewed the records of patients that were under treatment at the time when services were phased down. Priority for early appointments has been given to patients that need to be seen urgently, and following up where necessary on cases that had emergency treatment during the restricted access period.

The period of restricted access to elective activity has had an adverse effect on waiting lists and times. This is reflected in a 63.5% reduction in scheduled dental assessments in the 2020 when compared to 2019.

If there had been no pandemic, based on the 2019 data, it is estimated that 29,110 children would have been seen for dental examinations during the restricted period (28th March until 18th May). This figure does not include possible additional attendances for treatment after examination.

Full assessment of the impact on waiting lists of the restricted access period, reduced throughput on resumption, and the on-going commitment to testing on the backlog in service provision is being undertaken. Reducing waiting times is a key priority for the HSE, while at all times ensuring that services implement the organisational and preventive measures required to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

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

Yours Sincerely,



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Appendix 1: HSE Dental Service KPI Data 2017 - 2020

Table 1: a) No. of new Oral Health patients in target groups (1st/2nd, 4th and 6th class) attending for scheduled assessment

CHO	LHO	2017	2018	2019	2020	% 2020 v 2019
National Total		135,622	152,190	151,392	55,324	-63.5%
CHO 1	Total	11,582	15,182	19,266	9,129	-52.6%
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan	5,404	2,836	5,116	3,571	-30.2%
CHO 1	Donegal	*data not returned	5,760	8,321	2,659	-68.0%
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim	6,178	6,586	5,829	2,899	-50.3%
CHO 2	Total	7,160	12,455	12,145	2,904	-76.1%
CHO 2	Galway	2,034	4,223	4,317	531	-87.7%
CHO 2	Mayo	3,005	4,258	3,690	1,264	-65.7%
CHO 2	Roscommon	2,121	3,974	4,138	1,109	-73.2%
CHO 3	Total	947 ** data not complete	10,480	11,632	3,385	-70.9%
CHO 3	Clare	367**	2,691	4,148	1,481	-64.3%
CHO 3	Limerick	272**	3,507	2,544	963	-62.1%
CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	308**	4,282	4,940	941	-81.0%
CHO 4	Total	23,863	22,930	20,641	8,086	-60.8%

CHO 4	Kerry	3,094	3,999	3,419	1,277	-62.6%
CHO 4	North Cork	4,917	4,691	4,105	1,710	-58.3%
CHO 4	North Lee	6,244	5,555	5,175	2,027	-60.8%
CHO 4	South Lee	6,993	6,365	6,369	2,415	-62.1%
CHO 4	West Cork	2,615	2,320	1,573	657	-58.2%
CHO 5	Total	19,698	19,174	18,638	6,621	-64.5%
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	3,220	4,384	4,992	1,690	-66.1%
CHO 5	South Tipperary	6,894	6,185	6,239	2,485	-60.2%
CHO 5	Waterford	4,170	3,652	3,919	1,608	-59.0%
CHO 5	Wexford	5,414	4,953	3,488	838	-76.0%
CHO 6	Total	8,491	8,105	8,143	4,054	-50.2%
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire/ Dublin South East/Wicklow	8,491	8,105	8,143	4,054	-50.2%
CHO 7	Total	18,675	21,355	25,180	9,534	-62.1%
CHO 7	Dublin South City	3,743	2,768	3,175	1,627	-48.8%
CHO 7	Dublin South West	3,204	3,957	5,242	2,136	-59.3%
CHO 7	Dublin West	4,711	6,596	5,420	2,014	-62.8%
CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow	7,017	8,034	11,343	3,757	-66.9%
CHO 8	Total	23,961	20,963	17,842	3,829	-78.5%
CHO 8	Laois Offaly	4,354	3,656	3,154	720	-77.2%
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath	4,852	4,173	4,317	875	-79.7%

CHO 8	Louth	5,348	5,423	5,547	1,100	-80.2%
CHO 8	Meath	9,407	7,711	4,824	1,134	-76.5%
CHO 9	Total	21,245	21,546	17,905	7,782	-56.5%
CHO 9	Dublin North	8,997	8,527	7,419	2,456	-66.9%
CHO 9	Dublin North Central	3,863	3,958	2,676	2,003	-25.1%
CHO 9	Dublin North West	8,385	9,061	7,810	3,323	-57.5%