

25th June 2021

Pa Daly, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 24753/21

"To ask the Minister for Health the current extent of public orthodontic services in County Kerry: and his future plans for same"

Dear Deputy Daly,

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 orthodontics is to improve the appearance and function of misaligned or crooked teeth. The HSE provides free orthodontic treatment for children with the most severe orthodontic problems. The criteria used to decide whether a child qualifies for treatment in the HSE is determined by nationally agreed eligibility guidelines based on an international grading system (IOTN). To ensure the resources available in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) are used in the most appropriate way to meet the presenting needs, all referrals for the service are triaged and given a priority rating.

The emergence of Covid-19 in Ireland in March 2020 severely disrupted the delivery of health services in Ireland, including the orthodontic service and while services resumed adherence to infection, prevention, control measures, to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19, resulted in fewer treatments being provided per day. The recent Cyber Attack on the HSE system has had a significant negative impact on all HSE services including Orthodontic services and there continues to be an impact in throughput of clients while some x-ray/imaging services remain offline at this time.

While the demand for orthodontic services continues to grow, it is hoped that the introduction of a centralised wait list and the recruitment of a Consultant Orthodontist for Kerry will improve equity of access to orthodontic services across Cork and Kerry and help to reduce the overall waiting times for patients requiring orthodontic treatment in both Cork and Kerry.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are also currently working with the National Oral Health office around a new wait list initiative for a particular priority group waiting over 4 years for orthodontic treatment in Cork and Kerry and it is envisaged that this initiative will commence by Q3 2021.

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

Yours sincerely,



Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare