



06 December 2021

Deputy Mark Ward
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

56880/21: To ask the Minister for Health the number of children waiting for appointments in dentistry; the average waiting times by CHO area in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

56878/21: To ask the Minister for Health the number of children waiting on a dentistry service; the average waiting time after the completion of an assessment of needs by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ward,

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

I wish to advise the Deputy that the data is not readily available in the manner requested. In answering the above Parliamentary Questions, it is important to note the following:

- i. Eligibility for dental services is a statutory entitlement under the Health Acts. Almost one million children aged up to and including 15 years are eligible for HSE Dental services. All of the HSE Dental Services are provided free of charge.
- ii. Routine dental services are targeted at certain age groups, and use school class as part of the targeting of services, therefore the academic year can be a factor in reporting progress of targeted programmes. In many instances, information is not held in a format that facilitates the response to the question.
- iii. The HSE Routine Dental Services are provided on the basis of need, with a strong emphasis on prevention. This is delivered through targeted screening and prevention for school children at certain dental developmental milestones and for special needs groups. This approach involves identifying children with the greatest needs, and the highest risks of dental disease.
- iv. Emergency care for the relief of pain (e.g. toothache) and infection is available on a same day/following day basis for all for all children aged up to 15 years, and patients with Special Needs. Approximately 70,000 children attend for emergency treatment each year.
- v. Children in the targeted age groups are typically in 1st/2nd Class and 6th Class, with some 4th Class children being seen in some parts of the country as resources permits. Children in secondary school in general receive only an emergency service.

56880/21 Number of children waiting for oral health appointment

Following engagement with Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs), the following outlines the most recent information (Sept. 2021) for oral appointment waiting lists since academic year 2018/2019;

CHO 1

Year	6 th Class waiting list for routine check up	1 st & 2 nd Class routine check up	Total
2018/2019	0	0	0
2019/2020	0	0	0
2020/2021	3975	2951	6926
2021/2022	No information available to date	No information available to date	

CHO 2

Children awaiting routine 2 nd & 6 th class dental check (Galway)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
2 nd Class	858	2564	2874
6 th Class	899	2441	2761

Children awaiting routine 2 nd & 6 th class dental check (Mayo and Roscommon)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
2 nd Class	300	1300	2700
6 th Class	300	600	2000

CHO 3

Year	CHO 3 Dental Areas			Total
	Limerick*	N Tipp E Lk*	Clare**	
18/19	0		0	0
19/20	260	529	80	869
20/21	3474	3959	3148	10581
***21/22	3474	3959	3148	10581

* Limerick - Primary School Children are seen in 1st & 6th classes

* North Tipperary/East Limerick City - Primary School Children are seen in 1st & 6th classes

** Clare - Primary School Children are seen in 2nd & 6th classes

*** Estimate, as consent forms are not yet been sent to schools for distribution to students, on the date the information was provided.

CHO 4

The Primary Care Dental services team provides dental treatment services to eligible children, medical card holders, adults and children with special needs and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork and Kerry. Children under 16 years of age are treated in HSE dental clinics and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the Health Services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). Cork Kerry Primary Care Dental Service provides a school screening dental service which aims to target pupils in 2nd and 6th classes.

The emergence of Covid-19 in March 2020 had a significant impact on the provision of all health services including dental services throughout Cork and Kerry. As per our pandemic plan the HSE Dental Service had to curtail service provision to emergency services only and staff were largely redeployed into COVID testing, contact tracing and the vaccination program. The school dental screening program was suspended which has led to significant delays in the service.

While most oral health staff have now returned to core duties enabling the safe resumption of services, strict adherence to physical distancing and enhanced infection prevention and control measures has reduced the capacity of the available staffing from what it would have been pre-Covid and it is necessary to target the resources available. The recent Cyber Attack on the HSE system also had a significant negative impact on all HSE services including Dental services.

In the case of the school dental screening, taking into consideration all available resources at this time, the backlog of 6th class pupils from 2019/2020 is currently being prioritised. When this patient cohort is complete, screening of the 2020/2021 6th class children will commence followed by the recommencement of screening of 2nd class children. Additional resourcing is also being considered including wait list initiatives, and extending opening hours to facilitate additional clinics in the evenings and on Saturdays. The following table shows the current numbers of pupils to be screened:

Year	County	2 nd class	6 th class
2017/2018	Cork	Fully complete	Fully complete
2018/2019	Cork	Fully complete	Fully complete
2019/2020	Cork	Not commenced	300 outstanding
2020/2021	Cork	Not commenced	7,500 outstanding
Total			7,800
Year	County	2 nd class	6 th class
2017/2018	Kerry	Fully complete	Fully complete
2018/2019	Kerry	Fully complete	Fully complete
2019/2020	Kerry	1417 outstanding	846 outstanding
2020/2021	Kerry	1850 outstanding	2100 outstanding
Total		3,267	2,946

CHO 5

Children are targeted for dental examination in 2nd and 6th classes in primary school. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent HSE cyber-attack, the waiting times for primary school children have been adversely impacted resulting in considerable backlog of work.

However, whilst there is reduced capacity to work within Covid-19 restricted measures, the HSE dental services are endeavouring to clear this backlog of work.

Area	No. of children still awaiting their routine 2 nd & 6 th class dental check-ups for 2018	No. of children still awaiting their routine 2nd & 6th class dental check-ups for 2019	No. of children still awaiting their routine 2nd & 6th class dental check-ups for 2020	No. of children still awaiting their routine 2nd & 6th class dental check-ups for 2021 (to date)
Carlow/Kilkenny	2 nd class: 0 6 th class: 0	2 nd class: 437 6 th class: 546	2 nd class: 1957 6 th class: 2100	2 nd class: 1957* 6 th class: 2100*
South Tipperary	1 st class: 0 6 th class: 0	1 st class: 222 6 th class: 413	1 st class: 1,113 6 th class: 1,316	1 st class: 1,258* 6 th class: 1,343*
Waterford	2nd class: 903 6th class: 19	2nd class: 1447 6th class: 1420	2nd class: 2064 6th class: 1871	2nd class: 2010* 6th class: 1850*
Wexford	2nd class: 1273 6th class: 1641	2nd class: 2322 6th class: 2327	2nd class: 2226 6th class: 2428	2nd class: 2226* 6th class: 2426*

**Estimated values -total numbers from target classes for 2021 to 2022 school year had not been sought at this time (September 2021) as dental services were not ready to commence dental care.*

Please be assured that the HSE dental service monitors the waiting list on an ongoing basis in the overall context of available resources and prioritisation criteria.

CHO 6

The Principal Dental Surgeon in Community Healthcare East has advised that school data is collated in line with the school calendar. The waiting lists are indicated in the table below for school years 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021.

School Year	2nd Class	6th class
2017/2018	Nil	Nil
2018/2019	Nil	Nil
2019/2020	4915	322
2020/2021	4763	4139

CHO 7

The tables below represent the numbers awaiting routine examinations, in

- A. Dublin South City and Dublin West, and
- B. Kildare and West Wicklow, and Dublin South West

Table A. Dublin South City, Dublin West

Class Cohort Awaiting first examination	Academic year 2018/2019	Academic year 2019/2020	Academic year 2020/2021	Total
Second Class	0	2500	3950	6450
Sixth Class	0	0	3500	3500
Totals		2500	7450	9950

Table B. Kildare and West Wicklow, and Dublin South West

Class Cohort Awaiting first examination	Academic year 2018/2019	Academic year 2019/2020	Academic year 2020/2021	Total
Second Class	0	5586	5383	10969
Sixth Class	0	2286	5896	8182
Totals	0	7809	11279	19151

Data for academic year 2021/2022 is not yet available, however it is expected that numbers will be similar to those in 2020/2021.

CHO 8

Given available resources, children in first class national school have not been targeted since 2010 in County Laois, 2018 in Offaly and since 2019 in Longford and Westmeath. Given available resources and current waiting lists, priority is being given to examine and treat all children and adults with special needs and children in sixth class of national school. In line with service priorities and in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR),

data pertaining to first class national school class lists are not requested from the national schools and is therefore unavailable.

In Louth Meath the classes targeted historically were 1st (not 2nd), and 6th class. Dental check-ups for children in 1st class unfortunately had to be dropped from school year 2019/2020 onwards, in both Louth and Meath, due to shortage of dentists. This decision was made prior to Covid, and the impact of the pandemic has further exacerbated the backlog facing the depleted HSE dental service in Louth & Meath. The numbers given for 1st class for 2019 onwards represent the average annual figure for this cohort of children in Louth and Meath. The numbers for 6th class 2020 & 2021 are also cohort averages.

		Waiting list for Primary School children	No. still awaiting routine 2nd class check up	No. still awaiting routine 6th class check up
Laois	2018	1649	No Data	1649
	2019	1552	No Data	1552
	2020	1554	No Data	1554
	2021	1560	No Data	1560
Offaly	2018	0	No Data	0
	2019	160	No Data	160
	2020	1269	No Data	1269
	2021	1312	No Data	1312
Westmeath	2018	0	0	0
	2019	720	720	0
	2020	1502	No Data	1502
	2021	1540	No Data	1540
Longford	2018	0	0	0

	2019	230	230	0
	2020	624	No Data	624
	2021	632	No Data	632
Louth	2018	No Data	25	0
	2019	No Data	approx 2,500	approx 2,500
	2020	No Data	approx 2,500	approx 2,500
	2021	No Data	approx 2,500	approx 2,500
Meath	2018	No Data	32	0
	2019	No Data	approx 3,000	1,650
	2020	No Data	approx 3,000	approx 3,000
	2021	No Data	approx 3,000	approx 3,000

CHO 9

The following is the response on behalf of Community Health Organisation Dublin North City and County.

Dublin North West/ North City	2 nd class	6 th class
2017/2018 school year	All children targeted	All children targeted
2018/2019 school year	All children targeted	All children targeted
2019/2020 school year	Approx 3800 outstanding	All children targeted
2020/2021 school year	Approx 4200 outstanding	Approx 550 still to be targeted

In line with government guidelines the HSE limited access to dental services during the pandemic. In line with national priorities, a number of staff were also redeployed to train as vaccinators in our Covid Vaccination Centres and this caused further delays in the delivery of routine dental examinations for the majority of children in 2nd class for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school year. However during this period, emergency cases were offered an appointment.

Due to the unprecedented pressures of the service and the continued roll out of the vaccination programme, these children have not been placed on waiting lists and it is not planned to offer them an examination. Those children in 6th class who have not been yet targeted from the 2020/2021 school year will be offered an appointment.

Dublin North	2 nd class	6 th class
2017/2018 school year	All children targeted	All children targeted
2018/2019 school year	All children targeted	All children targeted
2019/2020 school year	Approx 3800 outstanding	Approx 1000 outstanding
2020/2021 school year	Approx 4200 outstanding	Approx 4200 outstanding

Similar to the above, it was not possible to target any 2nd class children for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school year in Dublin North. However these children were seen, when necessary, as an emergency. Due to the current pressures on the service these children have not been placed on waiting lists and it is not planned to offer them an examination. Those children in 6th class who have not been yet targeted from the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school year will be offered an appointment in due course.

56878/21Dental Treatment wait times

HSE Dental Service KPI data (Q3 2021) for the numbers of patients who commenced treatment within three months (Table 1) and those who commenced treatment more than three months (Table 2) of scheduled oral health appointments is detailed in Appendix 1.

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



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Appendix 1

Table 1: Schedule Treatment plan commenced - No. of oral health patients who had their first visit for active care within 3 months of scheduled oral health assessment

		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	TOTAL
National Total		2,191.0	3,020.0	4,611.0	5,399.0	3,023.0	3,406.0	3,802.0	4,175.0	6,219.0	35,846.0
CHO 1	Total	415.0	422.0	711.0	831.0	510.0	590.0	617.0	547.0	801.0	5,444.0
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan	47.0	88.0	128.0	193.0	0.0	0.0	94.0	38.0	153.0	741.0
CHO 1	Donegal	184.0	249.0	378.0	417.0	418.0	399.0	347.0	417.0	547.0	3,356.0
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim	184.0	85.0	205.0	221.0	92.0	191.0	176.0	92.0	101.0	1,347.0
CHO 2	Total	177.0	221.0	471.0	295.0	217.0	268.0	256.0	278.0	357.0	2,540.0
CHO 2	Galway	0.0	51.0	158.0	27.0	35.0	61.0	25.0	26.0	2.0	385.0
CHO 2	Mayo	79.0	101.0	130.0	82.0	67.0	84.0	68.0	92.0	140.0	843.0
CHO 2	Roscommon	98.0	69.0	183.0	186.0	115.0	123.0	163.0	160.0	215.0	1,312.0
CHO 3	Total	171.0	165.0	412.0	418.0	341.0	424.0	428.0	464.0	559.0	3,382.0
CHO 3	Clare	43.0	32.0	32.0	139.0	52.0	47.0	60.0	120.0	146.0	671.0
CHO 3	Limerick	66.0	76.0	323.0	202.0	188.0	214.0	202.0	148.0	203.0	1,622.0
CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	62.0	57.0	57.0	77.0	101.0	163.0	166.0	196.0	210.0	1,089.0
CHO 4	Total	125.0	197.0	676.0	816.0	247.0	296.0	705.0	753.0	1,130.0	4,945.0
CHO 4	Kerry	12.0	5.0	12.0	70.0	58.0	94.0	167.0	110.0	179.0	707.0
CHO 4	North Cork	27.0	39.0	151.0	166.0	27.0	20.0	122.0	171.0	142.0	865.0
CHO 4	North Lee	24.0	71.0	235.0	277.0	108.0	94.0	194.0	219.0	412.0	1,634.0
CHO 4	South Lee	61.0	82.0	226.0	251.0	54.0	88.0	134.0	192.0	260.0	1,348.0
CHO 4	West Cork	1.0	0.0	52.0	52.0			88.0	61.0	137.0	391.0
CHO 5	Total	136.0	288.0	310.0	446.0	337.0	473.0	330.0	386.0	451.0	3,157.0
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	42.0	63.0	82.0	142.0	114.0	184.0	109.0	117.0	120.0	973.0
CHO 5	South Tipperary	37.0	84.0	56.0	90.0	75.0	146.0	99.0	117.0	134.0	838.0
CHO 5	Waterford	50.0	116.0	153.0	162.0	78.0	83.0	78.0	111.0	134.0	965.0
CHO 5	Wexford	7.0	25.0	19.0	52.0	70.0	60.0	44.0	41.0	63.0	381.0

CHO 6	Total		176.0	191.0	182.0	297.0	163.0	157.0	167.0	211.0	331.0	1,875.0
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire		176.0	191.0	182.0	297.0	163.0	157.0	167.0	211.0	331.0	1,875.0
CHO 7	Total		296.0	419.0	657.0	941.0	612.0	626.0	680.0	813.0	1,492.0	6,536.0
CHO 7	Dublin South City		77.0	70.0	118.0	139.0	20.0	112.0	82.0	138.0	193.0	949.0
CHO 7	Dublin South West		90.0	231.0	120.0	196.0	145.0	134.0	140.0	142.0	259.0	1,457.0
CHO 7	Dublin West		67.0	76.0	299.0	384.0	221.0	248.0	260.0	227.0	374.0	2,156.0
CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow		62.0	42.0	120.0	222.0	226.0	132.0	198.0	306.0	666.0	1,974.0
CHO 8	Total		258.0	402.0	545.0	583.0	210.0	191.0	279.0	227.0	369.0	3,064.0
CHO 8	Laois Offaly		61.0	120.0	168.0	109.0	167.0	32.0	89.0	82.0	116.0	944.0
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath		32.0	126.0	213.0	143.0	43.0	159.0	190.0	145.0	253.0	1,304.0
CHO 8	Louth		123.0	121.0	102.0	91.0						437.0
CHO 8	Meath		42.0	35.0	62.0	240.0						379.0
CHO 9	Total		437.0	715.0	647.0	772.0	386.0	381.0	340.0	496.0	729.0	4,903.0
CHO 9	Dublin North		113.0	127.0	149.0	214.0	168.0	159.0	121.0	82.0	220.0	1,353.0
CHO 9	Dublin North Central		150.0	221.0	218.0	232.0	102.0	128.0	113.0	150.0	141.0	1,455.0
CHO 9	Dublin North West		174.0	367.0	280.0	326.0	116.0	94.0	106.0	264.0	368.0	2,095.0

Table 2: No. of oral health patients who had their first visit for active care more than 3 months after scheduled oral health assessment

			Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	TOTAL
National Total			589.0	738.0	1,110.0	889.0	812.0	307.0	439.0	393.0	545.0	5,822.0
CHO 1	Total		120.0	120.0	106.0	64.0	54.0	51.0	60.0	116.0	69.0	760.0
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan		36.0	6.0	5.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	18.0	10.0	85.0
CHO 1	Donegal		56.0	99.0	81.0	33.0	42.0	37.0	47.0	86.0	36.0	517.0
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim		28.0	15.0	20.0	29.0	12.0	14.0	5.0	12.0	23.0	158.0
CHO 2	Total		73.0	187.0	124.0	112.0	36.0	24.0	8.0	13.0	131.0	708.0
CHO 2	Galway		0.0	118.0	91.0	98.0	23.0	12.0	7.0	8.0	111.0	468.0
CHO 2	Mayo		10.0	21.0	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	82.0
CHO 2	Roscommon		63.0	48.0	22.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	20.0	158.0
CHO 3	Total		2.0	8.0	25.0	50.0	19.0	0.0	25.0	18.0	4.0	151.0
CHO 3	Clare		0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	11.0
CHO 3	Limerick		2.0	0.0	17.0	30.0	16.0	0.0	16.0	15.0	0.0	96.0

CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	0.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	3.0	0.0	8.0	3.0	4.0	44.0
CHO 4	Total	19.0	25.0	61.0	45.0	21.0	16.0	22.0	26.0	57.0	292.0
CHO 4	Kerry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CHO 4	North Cork	6.0	12.0	17.0	14.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	6.0	20.0	94.0
CHO 4	North Lee	6.0	4.0	20.0	15.0	10.0	7.0	7.0	5.0	14.0	88.0
CHO 4	South Lee	7.0	9.0	19.0	13.0	5.0	3.0	5.0	12.0	18.0	91.0
CHO 4	West Cork	0.0	0.0	5.0	3.0			3.0	3.0	5.0	19.0
CHO 5	Total	82.0	112.0	226.0	228.0	206.0	121.0	189.0	137.0	157.0	1,458.0
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	9.0	90.0	135.0	173.0	70.0	63.0	128.0	124.0	113.0	905.0
CHO 5	South Tipperary	26.0	1.0	28.0	15.0	32.0	0.0	1.0	10.0	0.0	113.0
CHO 5	Waterford	30.0	18.0	54.0	27.0	88.0	52.0	49.0	0.0	32.0	350.0
CHO 5	Wexford	17.0	3.0	9.0	13.0	16.0	6.0	11.0	3.0	12.0	90.0
CHO 6	Total	13.0	34.0	39.0	40.0	6.0	12.0	22.0	0.0	24.0	190.0
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire	13.0	34.0	39.0	40.0	6.0	12.0	22.0	0.0	24.0	190.0
CHO 7	Total	129.0	101.0	239.0	192.0	392.0	42.0	88.0	36.0	40.0	1,259.0
CHO 7	Dublin South City	0.0	1.0	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.0
CHO 7	Dublin South West	20.0	40.0	116.0	15.0	181.0	26.0	54.0	0.0	0.0	452.0
CHO 7	Dublin West	0.0	0.0	7.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	21.0	16.0	57.0
CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow	109.0	60.0	116.0	161.0	208.0	11.0	32.0	15.0	24.0	736.0
CHO 8	Total	133.0	144.0	285.0	137.0	67.0	30.0	13.0	33.0	34.0	876.0
CHO 8	Laois Offaly	74.0	65.0	45.0	19.0	31.0	0.0	7.0	7.0	24.0	272.0
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath	59.0	79.0	44.0	80.0	36.0	30.0	6.0	26.0	10.0	370.0
CHO 8	Louth	0.0	0.0	83.0	0.0						83.0
CHO 8	Meath	0.0	0.0	113.0	38.0						151.0
CHO 9	Total	18.0	7.0	5.0	21.0	11.0	11.0	12.0	14.0	29.0	128.0
CHO 9	Dublin North	17.0	7.0	5.0	21.0	11.0	11.0	12.0	14.0	15.0	113.0
CHO 9	Dublin North Central	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
CHO 9	Dublin North West	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	14.0