



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht  
Cúram Sláinte Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú,  
An Mhí Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse  
Sláinte, Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar  
Ardáin, An Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh  
Fhailí.

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23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2021

Mr Charlie Flanagan T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re: Parliamentary Question – 50229/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of HSE dental surgeon positions in County Laois; the number of vacancies in County Laois for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Charles Flanagan**

Dear Deputy Flanagan,

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. I have examined the matter and I outline the position as follows.

The Public Dental Service Laois provides a targeted service in line with priorities set out by the National Oral Health Office (NOHO). The ability of the service to meet these priorities is based on available resources. In light of available resources, the Public Dental Service Laois, targets adults and children with special needs, the schools dental programme targets only those children in sixth class national school and provides emergency care to children outside of target until aged sixteen years. Also, with further resignations of dental contractors within the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS), the Public Dental Service now must also provide emergency care to adult medical card holders who are unable to access treatment within the community.

While the service currently employs 4 (3.4 WTEs) General Dental Surgeons, however 1 is on maternity leave and another is unable to provide dental care to the eligible population due to being deemed a high risk pregnancy. The recruitment of an additional General Dental Surgeon post (1 WTE) has been approved to help address the current backlog and it is expected to be permanently filled in the coming weeks. The current active resource allocation therefore only allows for a limited level of service provision to the eligible population of County Laois.

The following measures are continually being reviewed to improve the dental service in general for the eligible population.

- a) Increase in contract hours of existing staff
- b) Approval of an increase in the WTE of existing HSE staff who wish to increase their contractual hours
- c) Employing additional dental teams
- d) Overtime
- e) Employing agency staff

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries on this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Des O'Flynn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Des O'Flynn  
Chief Officer  
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation