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24th January 2023

Deputy Mattie McGrath
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 61760/22: To ask the Minister for Health the total funding for HSE dental services in the past five years in County Tipperary; the number of children waiting for dental services in Tipperary; their waiting times; the location in which children in County Tipperary can have orthodontic treatment carried out; the number of orthodontists available to the HSE in this area; the criteria being applied that determines whether a child qualifies for HSE funded orthodontic treatment; the number waiting for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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.

HSE Services for Tipperary involves two Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) – CHO 3 and CHO 5. This interim response contains information from CHO 3. Following engagement with the relevant CHOs, the following outlines the current position;

CHO 3 (North Tipperary)

HSE Dental Service

All school children (up to 16th birthday) are eligible for a casualty / emergency dental appointment should they be in dental pain or have dental sepsis. The treatment provided at such an appointment is confined to the resolution of the presenting dental problem. Such appointments are on a next clinic day basis and so have a very short (day or so) waiting time.

The screening and treatment service is based on a targeted approach. In North Tipperary those target classes are 1st and 6th class. Therefore the figures given will relate to those 2 classes only.

Data is collected on a North Tipperary East Limerick (NTEL) basis and we do not remove the area of East Limerick from our figures.

I will therefore answer the query in relation to the last 5 academic years and for the dental area of NTEL for children in 1st and 6th classes.

Academic Year	Awaiting Dental Service		Waiting times
	6 th Class	1 st Class	
2022/23			Will send forms for 6 th class pupils after Easter 2023
2021/22	2,048	1 st class 21/22 not sent application forms	Have begun screening 6 th class but mainly all yet to be called
2020/21	1,982	1,825	Already seen
2019/20	2,004	1,838	Already seen
2018/19	2,022	1,895	Already seen
2017/18	1,695	1,899	Already seen

Funding for HSE Dental Services

The Dental service is run as a regional service across the HSE Mid-West area (CHO3) it is not possible to give a true figure in respect of North Tipperary. The funding is allocated for the service across CHO3 as a whole and is not broken down by geographical area. Based on the 2016 Census, the total population for the CHO3 area was 385,172. The population for North Tipperary was recorded as 71,370 which is approximately 19% of the population of CHO3.

Year	Total Budget for CHO 3 Dental Service
2018	€5,385,420.00
2019	€5,166,836.00
2020	€5,164,462.08
2021	€5,611,215.73
2022	€5,310,248.68
Total	<u>€26,638,182.49</u>

HSE Orthodontic Service

1. Orthodontic treatment is provided to patients in the North Tipperary area at clinics in Nenagh General Hospital and Thurles Primary Care Centre
2. 1 Specialist Orthodontist currently provides orthodontic treatment in the North Tipperary area. We are currently recruiting additional Specialist Orthodontists and it can be anticipated that once these positions have been filled we will be in a position to increase clinical cover in the North Tipperary area.

3. Patients who avail of orthodontic treatment within the HSE must have been considered to be eligible for such treatment in accordance with the HSE Modified IOTN Eligibility Guidelines (2007). Such guidelines permit an assessment of the severity of the impact of a patient's malocclusion on their oral health, and as a corollary, facilitate a grading of the need for treatment.
4. There are currently 128 patients on the orthodontic treatment waiting list in North Tipperary of which 30 patients are categorised as Grade 4 & 98 patients are categorised as Grade 5 of the Modified IOTN.

CHO 5 (South Tipperary)

Dental Services, South Tipperary:

- a) Budget for Schools Dental Programme in South Tipperary is as follows:
The table below illustrates the budget available for Schools Dental Funding on the assumption that approximately 90% of the service provision is to school children.

Year	Schools Dental Funding – South Tipperary
2022	€1.343M
2021	€1.35M
2020	€1.335M
2019	€1.36M
2018	€1.323M

- b) Waiting List for Schools Dental Programme:

South Tipperary Academic School Year	2nd Class	Period Waiting (from Sept start of term)	4th Class	Period Waiting (from Sept start of term)	6th class	Period Waiting (from Sept start of term)
2017/2018	0	N/A	184	63 mths	0	63 mths
2018/2019	0	N/A	180	51 mths	0	51 mths
2019/2020	0	N/A	849	39 mths	0	39 mths
2020/2021	93	27 mths	1218	27 mths	139	27 mths
2021/2022	756	15 mths	1198	15 mths	831	15 mths
2022/2023	1117	3 mths	1277	3 mths	1315	3 mths

Explanation of Dental Waiting List:

With regard to waiting lists for target classes, we work on the basis that a child is waiting for their target class screening and treatment from the September (start of school term) that they enter the target class.

Therefore if we are treating the 2021 to 2022 academic year 6th class, by December 2022, the child is waiting 1 year and 3 months.

We don't have total numbers for the 2022/2023 cohort as we have not commenced screening this cohort. Going to schools asking for those numbers would create an expectation that a service to that cohort is imminent so we generally when we are nearly ready to commence. Therefore the numbers for the 2022/2023 are an estimate.

Unfortunately although 4th class is a target class they do not get screened until that cohort is seen for the 6th class screening and many of the 6th class children are now waiting 2 years before they are screened but then it is no longer a 4th class screening but a 6th class (but often gone into 2nd or 3rd year in secondary school). The numbers waiting are tabulated above.

The waiting list generation is very different from a hospital waiting list which I understand is created when a patient has been assessed by a consultant and placed on their waiting list.

Orthodontic Service, South Tipperary:

a) Service location:

Clonmel Community Care Services, Western Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.
Occasionally patients living closer to Waterford may opt to have their treatment completed there.

b) Number of Orthodontics in South Tipperary area:

0.8 WTE Specialist Orthodontist / 0.2 WTE vacancy.

This post-holder carries out orthodontic treatment for the whole of South Tipperary (4 days per week).

0.1 WTE Consultant Orthodontist to carry out assessments – 1 day per fortnight.

c) Criteria for HSE funded Orthodontic Treatment:


The Criteria that determines whether a child qualifies for HSE funded Orthodontic treatment is the Nationally applied modified Index of Orthodontic Treatment Need (IOTN) 2007.

d) Orthodontic Waiting List in South Tipperary:

We currently have 568 patients residing in South Tipperary on the waiting list for Orthodontic treatment.

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