



Oifig Náisiúnta Sláinte Béal,  
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**25 April 2023**

**Deputy Denis Naughton**  
**Dáil Eireann**  
**Leinster House**  
**Kildare Street**  
**Dublin 2**

**PQ 17471/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of children currently awaiting a dental appointment in primary care, by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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.

The HSE Dental Services are provided through 17 Dental Areas, all of which continue to provide routine services. These services are delivered with a strong preventive ethos in order to minimise the incidence of dental disease in vulnerable populations. In particular this preventive approach involves the delivery of personalised oral health promotion for children and people with special care needs. Children are seen at ages that correspond with dental developmental milestones to identify opportunities for timely preventive interventions such as fissure sealants and the need for restorative treatment, as well as monitoring the eruption of the permanent dentition including possible orthodontic anomalies requiring referral for HSE orthodontic assessment.

The HSE Dental Service targets children in key school years (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes), offering them dental examinations, preventive care and restorative treatments for conditions noted. The ability to offer services to each of the school years has been limited due to availability of dental staff. Since the emergence of Covid-19, there has been a significant increase in delays in accessing routine treatment for those in target classes. This has resulted in backlogs emerging in the targeted schools programme.

As part of targeting of resources, each dental service maintains a commitment to urgent/emergency treatment for the relief of pain, infection, and the sequelae of trauma. Children in targeted classes are offered dental examination, with individual care plans based on each child's needs. For routine and preventive services, patient groups are prioritised with children and adults with special care needs given the highest priority, followed by children in 6th class. Where service deficits are identified locally, clinical teams can be redirected to address those needs.

The extent of the backlog in targeted services and delays in providing preventive interventions and treatment for patients are concerns for the HSE, with services working to reduce the backlog in treatment appointments. Delays in assessments may reduce opportunities for preventive measures as disease is not identified early. Levels of scheduled examinations improved to 65% of 2019 figures in 2022, but significant backlogs in treatment remain.

I wish to advise the Deputy that data is not available as requested. Appendix 1 details KPI data for the Dental Service by Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) and Local Health Office (LHO) end 2019 to end 2022. The reported metric is the number of new oral health patients in target groups attending for scheduled assessment. The Department of Education publishes the number of children in each school year annually (Appendix 2). Using the data published for the year 2021, the number of children in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes in the school enrollment for September 2022 is anticipated as 66071, 67423, and 71022 respectively (204516 in total) who meet the criteria for eligibility.

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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**Nader Farvardin,**  
**Interim AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations**



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**Appendix 1: No. of new Oral Health patients in target groups (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class) attending for scheduled assessment (2019 – 2022)**

CHO	LHO	Q4 2019	Q4 2020	Q4 2021	End December 2022
<b>National Total</b>		<b>151,392</b>	<b>55,324</b>	<b>82,494</b>	<b>99,367</b>
<b>CHO 1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19,266</b>	<b>9,129</b>	<b>13,800</b>	<b>13,637</b>
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan	5,116	3,571	3,135	4,250
CHO 1	Donegal	8,321	2,659	5,286	7,187
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim	5,829	2,899	5,379	2,200
<b>CHO 2</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12,145</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>6,156</b>	<b>7,073</b>
CHO 2	Galway	4,317	531	1,486	895
CHO 2	Mayo	3,690	1,264	2,057	2,027
CHO 2	Roscommon	4,138	1,109	2,613	4,151
<b>CHO 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,632</b>	<b>3,385</b>	<b>4,153</b>	<b>6,125</b>
CHO 3	Clare	4,148	1,481	1,307	1,784
CHO 3	Limerick	2,544	963	1,283	1,528

CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	4,940	941	1,563	2,813
<b>CHO 4</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>20,641</b>	<b>8,086</b>	<b>8,552</b>	<b>15,350</b>
CHO 4	Kerry	3,419	1,277	1,188	2,344
CHO 4	North Cork	4,105	1,710	1,494	3,252
CHO 4	North Lee	5,175	2,027	2,791	4,725
CHO 4	South Lee	6,369	2,415	2,233	3,763
CHO 4	West Cork	1,573	657	846	1,266
<b>CHO 5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>18,638</b>	<b>6,621</b>	<b>11,973</b>	<b>12,484</b>
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	4,992	1,690	3,418	3,075
CHO 5	South Tipperary	6,239	2,485	3,737	4,259
CHO 5	Waterford	3,919	1,608	2,972	2,909
CHO 5	Wexford	3,488	838	1,846	2,241
<b>CHO 6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,143</b>	<b>4,054</b>	<b>6,743</b>	<b>5,678</b>
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire/ Dublin South East/Wicklow	8,143	4,054	6,743	5,678
<b>CHO 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,180</b>	<b>9,534</b>	<b>12,059</b>	<b>15,151</b>
CHO 7	Dublin South City	3,175	1,627	2,363	3,456
CHO 7	Dublin South West	5,242	2,136	2,860	2,812
CHO 7	Dublin West	5,420	2,014	3,561	4,446

CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow	11,343	3,757	3,275	4,437
<b>CHO 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,842</b>	<b>3,829</b>	<b>6,124</b>	<b>8,581</b>
CHO 8	Laois Offaly	3,154	720	2,188	1,902
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath	4,317	875	2,633	2,212
CHO 8	Louth	5,547	1,100	709	1,812
CHO 8	Meath	4,824	1,134	594	2,655
<b>CHO 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,905</b>	<b>7,782</b>	<b>12,999</b>	<b>15,288</b>
CHO 9	Dublin North	7,419	2,456	2,828	4,562
CHO 9	Dublin North Central	2,676	2,003	2,561	2,845
CHO 9	Dublin North West	7,810	3,323	7,610	7,881



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## Appendix 2: Department of Education Data - Target Population Academic Year 2022-2023

County	2nd Class	4th Class	6th Class	Target classes
Carlow	914	920	1021	2855
Cavan	1128	1197	1234	3559
Clare	1520	1592	1584	4696
Cork	7473	7688	8127	23288
Donegal	2086	2215	2407	6708
Dubin(City)	5749	5739	5973	17461
Dublin(Dun LaoghaireRathdown)	2595	2539	2557	7691
Dublin(Fingal)	4548	4717	4844	14109
Dublin(South)	4366	4390	4453	13209
Galway	3515	3663	3836	11014
Kerry	1801	1940	2049	5790
Kildare	3581	3583	3857	11021
Kilkenny	1363	1371	1468	4202
Laois	1331	1332	1420	4083
Leitrim	469	444	489	1402
Limerick	2687	2762	2963	8412
Longford	604	678	679	1961
Louth	1998	2066	2198	6262
Mayo	1750	1766	1856	5372
Meath	3193	3188	3491	9872
Monaghan	943	962	1005	2910
Offaly	1154	1131	1229	3514
Roscommon	982	958	1000	2940
Sligo	867	944	947	2758
Tipperary	2182	2151	2283	6616
Waterford	1662	1690	1869	5221
Westmeath	1338	1423	1508	4269
Wexford	2232	2165	2320	6717
Wicklow	2040	2209	2355	6604
<b>National</b>	<b>66071</b>	<b>67423</b>	<b>71022</b>	<b>204516</b>