



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach
Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte Pobail Lár Tire,
An Lú, An Mhí

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte,
Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar Ardáin,
An Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh Fhailí.

Office of the Chief Officer
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24th March, 2023

Ms. Imelda Munster T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: Parliamentary Question – 11124/23

To ask the Minister for Health the waiting list for the HSE school dental screening service for CHO8, by county and by school year and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Munster,

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 outlined the position as follows;

The Public Dental Service CHO8 continues to provide 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 CHO8 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. The HSE Dental Service has continuously assisted patients in seeking dental care from participating DTSS contractors. However more recently, these requests from patients have become more frequent as many fail to access care and in many cases there is no option of redirecting patients to alternative DTSS contractors due the ever increasing resignations from the scheme.

The Public Dental service CHO8 is in fact currently five years behind in calling sixth class children for assessment and treatment in Co Laois, three years behind in counties Louth , Meath and Offaly, and two years behind in counties Longford and Westmeath . To ensure a fair and equitable service, children are being called in order of their position on the waiting lists which is depicted overleaf;



Current numbers of 6th class students to be called	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Laois	1119	1537	1717	1524	1500
Offaly	0	0	333	1204	1204
Longford	0	0	0	389	654
Westmeath	0	0	0	894	1538
Louth	0	0	502	2639	2734
Meath	0	0	980	2586	2952

The following measures are continually being reviewed to improve the dental service in general for the eligible population and to address the treatment waiting lists outlined above;

- a) Increase in contract hours of existing staff
- b) Recruitment of additional dental teams
- c) Overtime hours
- d) Employing agency staff
- e) Outsourcing to external practitioners

In relation to recruitment, there would appear to be a national shortage of both Dental Surgeons and Dental hygienists owing to the significant challenges faced nationally in attempting to fill vacant posts, either through recruitment campaigns or using numerous recruitment agencies.

A further three recruitment campaigns have commenced in an attempt to recruit full time General Dental Surgeons, a Senior Dental Surgeon and Senior Dental nurses to the CHO8 Dental service.

Please be advised that the Dental staff CHO8 are working hard to provide care to those priorities groups as outlined above.



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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Des O'Flynn', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

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