



Oifig Náisiúnta Sláinte Béil,
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08 June 2023

**Deputy Alan Farrell
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 25178/23: To ask the Minister for Health if all schools with special classes have been contacted by the HSE to advise them that their pupils attending the special classes are given priority for dental services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Farrell,

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 Service provides targeted and emergency services to children and adults with additional needs. People with additional needs requiring special care dentistry are those with a condition, disability or activity restriction that directly or indirectly affects their oral health and is impacted by the personal and/or the environmental context of the individual. The HSE Dental Service organises service provision through Principal Dental Surgeons in local dental areas.

The HSE Dental Service uses school classes as an organisational structure for identifying children who may be eligible for services. Special classes, which are part of the Primary School system, are prioritised for targeted services. The availability of services to any targeted group is dependent on available resources. In identifying eligible patients, Principal Dental Surgeons interact with schools in their dental area to identify children who are eligible for services within available resources.

Oral healthcare services for children and adults with additional needs are included in the reorientation of services described in Smile Agus Sláinte (National Oral Health Policy). The initiation of the implementation of the policy is included in priorities and funding from budget 2023.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but if you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

**Dr Anne M O'Neill,
HSE AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations**