

19th October, 2023

Ms. Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 44297/23

"To ask the Minister for Health whether a school dental programme could be provided in Skibbereen, County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

The HSE Primary Care Dental Service provides dental treatment to eligible children, medical card holders, adults and children with special needs and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork and Kerry. Children under 16 years of age are treated in HSE dental clinics and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the Health Services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

HSE Dental Services discontinued operating from the Skibbereen Dental Clinic, after its closure during the COVID pandemic, because the clinic does not meet the required infection prevention and control standards now necessary in the provision of clinical treatment. Clients in locations previously seen in the Skibbereen clinic were directed to the Primary Healthcare Care Centre in Schull.

Also, the service is finding it difficult to fill vacant general dental surgeon (GDS) posts generally, but it is especially difficult to fill vacant GDS posts in the West Cork area. A number of panellists on an existing HSE GDS panel have refused to accept vacant posts in West Cork. HSE Dental Services Cork will re-advertise the vacant Dental Surgeon post in the Mizen Medical Centre in the near future.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mari O'Donovan
Acting Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare