



19th April 2024

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re PQ – 15206/24 To ask the Minister for Health the total number of specialist orthodontists, consultant orthodontists and orthodontist assistants currently working within HSE dental services in County Louth for both adults and children from 2020 to date, by location, areas served, current wait times and current vacant open posts for same; if the HSE recruitment embargo has impacted on these posts; if so , if he will undertake to have the embargo removed immediately for this sector to ensure adults and children receive appropriate orthodontic care ;and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

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.

Year	Consultant Orthodontist	Specialist Orthodontist
2020	1.0 WTE post shared between Louth Meath & Ashtowngate	2.2 WTE
2021	1.0 WTE post shared between Louth Meath & Ashtowngate	2.2 WTE 1.0 WTE vacancy from June 2021
2022	1.0 WTE post shared between Louth Meath & Ashtowngate	1.2 WTE 0.4 WTE for 4 months 1.0 WTE vacancy
2023	Nil – 1.0 WTE vacant post	1.2 WTE 1.0 WTE vacancy
2024	Nil – 1.0 WTE vacant post	0.2 WTE (increased to 0.6 from Jan to April) 2.0 WTE vacancies



The Orthodontic service provides assessment and treatment to children only and the areas served are Louth and Monaghan. The current wait time for assessment is four months and there are currently 352 patients awaiting assessment. Since November 2023 there has been a pause on recruitment in the HSE which has recently been lifted for specialist orthodontists and the recruitment process has commenced again in this area. Both Specialist Orthodontic vacancies are awaiting advertisement. The recruitment pause did not affect the recruitment of the vacant Consultant post which covers both Louth & Meath. This has been advertised on public jobs.ie on a number of occasions and the current advertisement is closing on 25th April 2024.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret M.J. Kelleher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Margaret Kelleher
A/Head of Primary Care Services
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation