



Oifig Náisiúnta Sláinte Béil,
31-33 Sráid Caitriona, Luimneach
Teil: 061 464140

E: nationaloralhealth@hse.ie

National Oral Health Office
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick
Tel: 061 464140

Email: nationaloralhealth@hse.ie

22 February 2024

**Deputy Cormac Devlin
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 5058/24: To ask the Minister for Health to confirm the annual budget for the school dental programme for children and to detail, in tabular form, the number of appointments in the years 2020 - 2023, by county; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Devlin,

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 Health Services Executive delivers dental services to children under the age of 16, 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 (2nd, 4th and 6th classes), offering them dental examinations, preventive care and restorative treatments for conditions noted. 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. The ability to offer services to each of the school years has been limited due to availability of dental staff.

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. Where service deficits are identified locally, additional resources where available 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

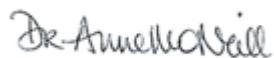
reduce the backlog in treatment appointments. Delays in assessments may reduce opportunities for preventive measures as disease is not identified early.

The annual budget for the HSE Community Dental Service, which includes the school programme, was €64.93m in 2023.

Appendix 1 details KPI data for the Dental Service (end 2020 to end August 2023 - latest available). The reported metric is the number of new oral health patients in target groups attending for scheduled assessment.

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

Yours Sincerely,



Anne O'Neill
Assistant National Director, Oral Health



Oifig Náisiúnta Sláinte Béil,
31-33 Sráid Caitriona, Luimneach
Teil: 061 464140

E: nationaloralhealth@hse.ie

National Oral Health Office
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick
Tel: 061 464140

Email: nationaloralhealth@hse.ie

Appendix 1: No. of new Oral Health patients in target groups (1st/2nd, 4th and 6th class) attending for scheduled assessment (2020 – Aug 2023)

| CHO | LHO | Q4 2020 | Q4 2021 | Q4 2022 | Aug 2023 (Latest Available) |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| National Total | | 55,324 | 82,494 | 99,367 | 68351 |
| CHO 1 | Total | 9,129 | 13,800 | 13,637 | 8,137 |
| CHO 1 | Cavan Monaghan | 3,571 | 3,135 | 4,250 | 3,563 |
| CHO 1 | Donegal | 2,659 | 5,286 | 7,187 | 3,915 |
| CHO 1 | Sligo Leitrim | 2,899 | 5,379 | 2,200 | 659 |
| CHO 2 | Total | 2,904 | 6,156 | 7,073 | 5,936 |
| CHO 2 | Galway | 531 | 1,486 | 895 | 1,525 |
| CHO 2 | Mayo | 1,264 | 2,057 | 2,027 | 1,796 |
| CHO 2 | Roscommon | 1,109 | 2,613 | 4,151 | 2,615 |
| CHO 3 | Total | 3,385 | 4,153 | 6,125 | 3,289 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| CHO 3 | Clare | 1,481 | 1,307 | 1,784 | 1,178 |
| CHO 3 | Limerick | 963 | 1,283 | 1,528 | 1,165 |
| CHO 3 | North Tipperary East Limerick | 941 | 1,563 | 2,813 | 946 |
| CHO 4 | Total | 8,086 | 8,552 | 15,350 | 11,118 |
| CHO 4 | Kerry | 1,277 | 1,188 | 2,344 | 1,637 |
| CHO 4 | North Cork | 1,710 | 1,494 | 3,252 | 2,618 |
| CHO 4 | North Lee | 2,027 | 2,791 | 4,725 | 3,075 |
| CHO 4 | South Lee | 2,415 | 2,233 | 3,763 | 2,537 |
| CHO 4 | West Cork | 657 | 846 | 1,266 | 1,251 |
| CHO 5 | Total | 6,621 | 11,973 | 12,484 | 7,784 |
| CHO 5 | Carlow Kilkenny | 1,690 | 3,418 | 3,075 | 1,507 |
| CHO 5 | South Tipperary | 2,485 | 3,737 | 4,259 | 3,068 |
| CHO 5 | Waterford | 1,608 | 2,972 | 2,909 | 1,828 |
| CHO 5 | Wexford | 838 | 1,846 | 2,241 | 1,381 |
| CHO 6 | Total | 4,054 | 6,743 | 5,678 | 4,077 |
| CHO 6 | Dun Laoghaire/ Dublin South East/Wicklow | 4,054 | 6,743 | 5,678 | 4,077 |
| CHO 7 | Total | 9,534 | 12,059 | 15,151 | 11,135 |
| CHO 7 | Dublin South City | 1,627 | 2,363 | 3,456 | 2,184 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | | |
| CHO 7 | Dublin South West | 2,136 | 2,860 | 2,812 | 2,066 |
| CHO 7 | Dublin West | 2,014 | 3,561 | 4,446 | 3,315 |
| CHO 7 | Kildare West Wicklow | 3,757 | 3,275 | 4,437 | 3,570 |
| CHO 8 | Total | 3,829 | 6,124 | 8,581 | 5,319 |
| CHO 8 | Laois Offaly | 720 | 2,188 | 1,902 | 1,177 |
| CHO 8 | Longford Westmeath | 875 | 2,633 | 2,212 | 1,503 |
| CHO 8 | Louth | 1,100 | 709 | 1,812 | 1,208 |
| CHO 8 | Meath | 1,134 | 594 | 2,655 | 1,431 |
| CHO 9 | Total | 7,782 | 12,999 | 15,288 | 11,556 |
| CHO 9 | Dublin North | 2,456 | 2,828 | 4,562 | 3,432 |
| CHO 9 | Dublin North Central | 2,003 | 2,561 | 2,845 | 2,738 |
| CHO 9 | Dublin North West | 3,323 | 7,610 | 7,881 | 5,386 |