



15 March 2024

Deputy Bernard Durkin
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 9925/24: To ask the Minister for Health to indicate the total number of children currently awaiting orthodontic treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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 Orthodontic Service is provided in Regional Orthodontic Departments. Access to treatment with the HSE Orthodontic Service is limited to those children with the most severe and complex orthodontic treatment needs. Referral for orthodontic assessment is usually made in 6th Class. The Modified Index of Treatment Needs (Modified IOTN) system is used in all regions to determine if a child will be accepted for treatment. There are a number of categories within the Modified IOTN system, and these are used to prioritise care, children whose treatment need is assessed as being in Grade 4 or Grade 5 of the Index are offered treatment with the HSE. Patients and their parents face difficulties in accessing orthodontic treatment with the HSE. These difficulties are expressed through the very high numbers waiting for assessment, and in both the numbers waiting for treatment and the length of time waiting for treatment. The predominant causative factor is lack of treatment capacity in the service. Table 1 details the number of orthodontic patients waiting to commence treatment following assessment as at end Dec 2023.

No. of orthodontic patients (grade 5) waiting to commence treatment following assessment	7258
No. of orthodontic patients (grade 4) waiting to commence treatment following assessment	3874

Table 1: Q4 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 O'Neill
Assistant National Director, Oral Health