



28th May 2024

Deputy Imelda Munster,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re PQ – 20880/24 To ask the Minister for Health, the number of children currently awaiting dental treatment, including waiting times, in counties Louth and Meath, under the primary school dental checks scheme, including details of the number of children who have not received checks when they were due and how long overdue these checks are; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Imelda Munster

Dear Deputy Munster,

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;

Please see below waiting list for children in 6th class National School in Counties Louth and Meath.

	Louth	Meath
School Year	Total Numbers Waiting	Total Numbers Waiting
2021-2022	672	785
2022-2023	2,328	2,174
2023-2024	2,899	2,614

The Public Dental Service Louth Meath continues to provide a targeted service in line with priorities set out by the National Oral Health Office (NOHO). The ability of the service to meet these priorities is based on available resources.

In light of available resources, the Public Dental Service Louth Meath targets adults and children with special needs, the schools dental programme targets only those children in sixth class national school and provides emergency care to children outside of target until aged sixteen years. Also, with further resignations of dental contractors within the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS), the Public Dental Service now must also provide emergency care to adult medical card holders who are unable to access treatment within the community.

The Louth Meath HSE Dental Service has continuously assisted patients in seeking dental care from participating DTSS contractors. However more recently, these requests from patients have become more frequent as many fail to access care and in



many cases there is no option of redirecting patients to alternative DTSS contractors due the ever increasing resignations from the scheme .

As detailed above, the schools dental programme in Louth Meath is nearing three years behind the current 6th class academic cohort, with the service currently targeting 6th class 2021-22. To ensure a fair and equitable service, children are being called in order of their position on the waiting list.

Rest assured that the Dental staff Louth Meath are continuing to work hard to provide care to those priority groups as outlined above.

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 'Grainne McGill'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'G' and 'M'.

Grainne McGill
A/Head of Primary Care Services
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation