



16th May 2024

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd
Dáil Éireann
Kildare St
Dublin 2

Re: PQ-21198/24 To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on any discussions between his Department and the Irish Dental Association on further revision of the dental treatment service scheme; the plans his Department and the HSE have to ensure that patients in Louth and Meath who have medical cards receive the timely treatment they need in the interim; if he will provide the most recent figures on the number of registered dentists in the scheme in both Louth and Meath as of 1st May 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Fergus O'Dowd

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.

The number of DTSS contractors operating within counties Louth and Meath have fallen over the past number of years, as outlined in the table below. The figures show the numbers of individual contracts held and the clear drop in providers in both counties from a total of 61 in 2019 to the current number of 26.

DTSS contracts in Louth and Meath

YEAR	LOUTH	MEATH	TOTAL DTSS CONTRACTS
2019	28	33	61
2024	14	12	26

The DTSS has seen many resignations nationally which has been widely published on national media. As a result, many patients are currently unable to access dental care in their immediate locality and must travel within or outside their home county to access dental care with a participating DTSS contracted dentist.

Of those practices who continue to provide dental care for eligible DTSS patients, many have been unable to take on any additional patients as they simply do not have



the capacity to meet the ever increasing demand. The current significant reduction of the DTSS requires urgent action at the highest level to ensure patients can access the necessary care within their local community

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