



Mari O'Donovan,
Interim Head of Service,
Cúram Priomhúil
FSS an Iardheiscirt

Áras na Ceachan,
Páirc Ghnó agus Teicneolaíochta,
Bóthar na Modh Feirme,
Corcaigh. T12 XHT4

Mari O'Donovan,
Interim Head of Service,
Primary Care
HSE South West

Caha House,
Business and Technology Park,
Model Farm Road,
Cork. T12 XHT4

southwest.hse.ie
E: Mari.ODonovan@hse.ie

12th May, 2025

Mr. Pat Buckley., T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 19698/25

"To ask the Minister for Health to address as a matter of urgency the long waiting times, and in some cases the lack of availability, of the school dental Programme for children in east Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Buckley,

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.

The HSE Primary Care Dental Service provides dental treatment to eligible children, adults and children with special care needs and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork and Kerry. Children under 16 years of age and special care needs patients are treated in HSE dental clinics. Medical card holders can access routine dental care, including dentures, from private dentists who participate in the dental treatment services scheme (DTSS).

The service is operating a school screening program for children in East Cork, and County wide, and is prioritising children in sixth class for dental care. We plan to screen two target classes this year, both sixth and second classes. Also, all children under 16 years are eligible for an emergency service in cases of acute dental pain or infection. Dental care is also provided to adults and children with special care needs and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork County.

Unfortunately, recruitment challenges have resulted in staff shortages in the area of dental surgeons. As a result, we are currently behind schedule in the school screening program in the Youghal area.

I wish to apologise for this delay and wish to reassure you that efforts to increase resources throughout and reduce waiting times are indeed our top priority. The Senior Leadership Team, as part of the post prioritisation process, have approved a number of posts, inclusive of Dental Surgeon posts, and these are currently being progressed via the appropriate recruitment pathways.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mari O'Donovan
Interim Head of Service - Primary Care,
HSE South West