



18<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Deputy Erin McGreehan  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**Re PQ 23651/25 : To ask the Minister for Health the action being taken to fill consultant and specialist orthodontist vacancies in Dundalk; if people in urgent need of care can avail of an alternative appointment or the national treatment purchase scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter – Erin McGreehan**

Dear Deputy McGreehan,

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.

Actions undertaken by the HSE to resolve the staffing deficit for the vacant Consultant Orthodontist and Specialist Orthodontist posts are as follows:

#### **Consultant Orthodontist Post – WTE 1.0 (Louth Meath)**

- This post has been vacant since late December 2022
- May 2023 - May 2024 Advertised on an ongoing basis via HSE Website & PublicJobs.ie - No Applicants
- June 2024 - Reached out to Agencies – No Applicants
- July 2024 - Re-advertised via HSE Website & PublicJobs.ie and also with British Dental Journal and Belfast Telegraph– No Applicants
- July 2024 - Contacted relevant Universities in Northern Ireland and UK – No applicants
- August 2024 – Dec 2024 Advertised via HSE Website & PublicJobs.ie– No Applicants
- Dec 2024 – Advertisement stopped due to – New Consultant Contract – New Application to be submit to Consultant Applications Advisory Committee (CAAC)
- Currently progressing post through CAAC to be recommence advertisements in the coming months.
- Mar 2025 – reached out again to agencies on and off framework – No applications.

#### **Specialist Orthodontist – WTE 2.0**

- 1 WTE post vacant since Jan 2024
- Following revision of national derogation process (CEO Ref: 10885 Revised- attached) progression for replacement of 2.0 WTE progressed
- May 2024 – Contacted four Agencies as per HSE Framework - No Applicants
- June 2024 - Advertised via HSE Website & PublicJobs.ie and also with British Dental Journal and Belfast Telegraph and contacted University's Northern Ireland and UK - No Applicants



- June 2024 - Contacted eight more Agencies as per HSE Framework - No Applicants
- July 2024 – Contacted Agency Company off HSE Framework
- Aug 2024 – Campaign stopped due to Pay & Numbers Strategy (PNS). To note due to the PNS there is now only 1.0WTE as a valid vacant position which we have continued to recruit for.
- Ongoing contact with on and off HSE Framework agencies has continued since approval from May 2024.

#### **Specialist Orthodontist – WTE 0.2**

- Post vacant since March 2025
- Currently progressing through the HSE recruitment approval process.

Two other Community Healthcare Areas (CHO) were also contacted to ascertain if resources from these areas could be used to help the staffing challenges in Louth Orthodontic Service. Due to these areas working at full capacity; no additional resources could be sourced outside of CHO8.

Within CHO8 we have provided the following:

1. In 2024, Primary Care funded 40 patients in interrupted care and in critical need to have their treatment completed to be transferred to an Orthodontic private practice in Northern Ireland.
2. From May 2024 to April 2025 a specialist Orthodontist based in Longford travelled to Navan and Dundalk providing approximately 1-2 days per month over this period for debonds and interrupted care patients attending Louth Orthodontic Service.
3. The 2.0wte Specialist Orthodontists based in Navan providing orthodontic care for both Meath and Cavan patients, have also provided emergency appointments for patients who would normally attend the Louth Orthodontic Service.

The National Treatment purchase scheme does not apply to community orthodontic service.

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,

---

Joseph Ruane  
Head of Primary Care Services  
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation