

**Head of Service Primary Care**

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**15<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Ms Emer Currie TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

**Email:** [emer.currie@oireachtas.ie](mailto:emer.currie@oireachtas.ie)

**PQ 24132/25** - *"To ask the Minister for Health if she will outline the current staffing levels within the HSE school dental programme in CHO9, in light of the significant number of children under 13-years-old awaiting dental screenings; her plans to increase staffing and restore a full screening schedule; and if she will make a statement on the matter"* - **Emer Currie TD**

Dear Deputy Currie,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Integrated Health Areas (IHA) Dublin North County and Dublin North City & West Primary Care Dental team have advised that children under the age of 13 are entitled to three dental screenings under the school dental program, typically scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> class.

However, due to ongoing staffing limitations, no 4<sup>th</sup> class screenings have been conducted in these areas since 2020. Screenings for children in 6<sup>th</sup> class continue to be offered annually. The number of 2<sup>nd</sup> class children who receive screenings each year depends on available resources. Those who are not screened while in 2<sup>nd</sup> class must wait until 6<sup>th</sup> class for their next opportunity.

Current staffing levels for the school screening programs in each of the IHA areas are outlined below:

Integrated Health Areas of Dublin North County and Dublin North City & West		
	Dublin North County WTE	Dublin North City & West WTE
Dental Hygienists	1.9	2.4
Dental Nurses	16	17.8
Dentists	9.8	11.2

*Please note that these figures do not account for the various leave types including maternity, parental and parents leave.*

In light of the national shortage of dental staff within the HSE and the impact this is having on children's services, our CEO Bernard Gloster has advised that all Dental vacancies should be prioritised for backfilling. Addressing the current vacancies in Dublin North County and Dublin North City & West will help improve access to dental care for children.

The Dental service has been informed that the implementation of the National Oral Health Policy remains a top priority for the Government, with the aim of enhancing patient access to oral healthcare services. A plan outlining the first phase of this policy's rollout is expected to be published shortly.

We have also been advised that the implementation plan will include workforce planning and legislative reform. However, the advancement of any measures requiring additional resources will depend on the outcomes of the annual budgetary process.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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**Brian Kirwan**  
**Acting Head of Service Primary Care**  
**HSE Integrated Health Areas of Dublin North County and**  
**Dublin North City & Wes**