



7th October 2025

Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 47628/25 - To ask the Minister for Health if she will provide an update on orthodontic services provided in the Louth area; her plans to ensure adequate personnel and services, particularly for grade 4 and 5 dental patients; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó Murchú

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 Orthodontic Department in Dundalk provides Orthodontic treatment to patients whom live in County Louth and County Monaghan that are referred from the HSE Dental Service. At present the service has no Consultant Orthodontist or Specialist Orthodontists working in this clinic due to vacant posts.

The Consultant Orthodontist post has been vacant since late December 2022. Despite various efforts to recruit; including advertisement in Britain Dental Journal, the Belfast Telegraph and relevant universities in UK and Northern Ireland last year, there have been no applicants. The recruitment process was paused in December 2024 due to the new consultant contract. Submission was made to the Consultant Applications Advisory Committee (CAAC) in 2025 for this post to be advertised again under the new contract, and approval was confirmed in July 2025. The post will be going back out for campaign in the coming weeks. We are also seeking Consultant Support from neighbouring areas.

We currently have two Specialist Orthodontist posts (1.2WTE) vacancies in the Dundalk Clinic. Despite multiple campaigns; including advertisement in Britain Dental Journal, the Belfast Telegraph and relevant universities in UK and Northern Ireland last year, we were not successful. These posts will be re-advertised again in the coming weeks.

We have been seeking agency since July 2024 for both the Consultant and Specialist Orthodontic posts but have also not been successful.

There are 2 WTE Specialist Orthodontists based in Navan and one Specialist Orthodontist based in Longford who have also been supporting the remaining Dundalk based patients who are in treatment.

Once orthodontic staff vacancies are filled Category 4 and 5 patients will benefit from improved service capacity.



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

Yours sincerely,

Martina Ralph
Acting Head of Primary Care Services
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation