



8th October 2025

Deputy Brendan Smith
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 50842/25 - To ask the Minister for Health to outline the proposals to provide orthodontic services for children in Cavan and Monaghan; and if she will make a statement on the matter – Brendan Smith

Dear Deputy Smith,

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 Navan provides Orthodontic treatment to patients whom live in County Meath and County Cavan that are referred from the HSE Dental Service. At present we have two Specialist Orthodontists in this Clinic. 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 (covering both Dundalk and Navan clinics) or Specialist Orthodontists based in the Dundalk 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 been supporting patients who are in treatment in the Orthodontic Department in Dundalk.



If patients are on the HSE Orthodontic Assessment Waiting list and have not had their assessment yet, the parents have the option to undergo this evaluation in Northern Ireland and potentially get reimbursed for a portion of the expenses, provided it aligns with the HSE Orthodontic Assessment Tool via the National Oral Health Office. Please see details attached.

If patients have had an assessment and are awaiting commencement of treatment through the Scheme they can contact the Cross Border Directive where the parents can apply for reimbursement for some of the treatment costs. Details of this scheme and costs can be found on the Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme (NIPHS) information leaflet attached.

We are actively recruiting additional orthodontic staff to improve service capacity. When these roles are filled, notifications will be sent to patients and scheduling of appointments will begin.

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