



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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24th April 2024

Deputy O'Dowd,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 1564/24 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide the details of the total number of primary school pupils who are currently awaiting to have their in-school eye, hearing and dental checks, by each CHO area in each of the years 2010 to date; the recommended and targeted age for each of the relevant checks; what improvements are being considered to clear the backlogs in this area, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Fergus O'Dowd

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 1564/24) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

With regard to dental services, the HSE targets children in key school years (2nd, 4th and 6th classes), offering dental examinations, preventive care and restorative treatments for conditions noted. As part of targeting of resources, each dental service maintains a commitment to urgent/emergency treatment for the relief of pain, infection, and the sequelae of trauma. Children in targeted classes are offered dental examination, with individual care plans based on each child's needs. For routine and preventive services, patient groups are prioritised with children and adults with special care needs given the highest priority, followed by children in 6th class.

I wish to advise that the system does not hold data in the manner requested in your above question and full data for 2010-2016 is not readily available on the system. However, the table below outlines available data for the Dental Service (end 2017 to end 2023). The reported metric is the number of new oral health patients in target groups attending for scheduled assessment. Each year, a new cohort of children enters the target classes. In 2023, 104,488 were seen by Dental Services.



No. of new Oral Health patients in target groups (1st/2nd, 4th and 6th class) attending for scheduled assessment (2017 – 2023):

CHO	Q4 2017	Q4 2018	Q4 2019	Q4 2020	Q4 2021	Q4 2022	Q4 2023
CHO 1	11,582	15,182	19,266	9,129	13,800	13,637	12,138
CHO 2	7,160	12,455	12,145,	2,904	6,156	7,073	9,531
CHO 3	947* incomplete	10,480	11,632	3,385	4,153	6,125	5,060
CHO 4	23,863	22,930	20,641	8,086	8,552	15,350	16,806
CHO 5	19,698	19,174	18,638	6,621	11,973	12,484	11,626
CHO 6	8,491	8,105	8,143	4,054	6,743	5,678	5,900
CHO 7	18,675	21,355	25,180	9,534	12,059	15,151	16,670
CHO 8	23,961	20,963	17,842	3,829	6,124	8,581	8,016
CHO 9	21,245	21,546	17,905	7,782	12,999	15,288	18,741

In relation to the hearing and vision checks these are targeted at primary school children in junior infants. These checks are provided via the local Community Health Organisation. The data you have requested is not currently routinely collated on a national level and therefore we cannot provide the requested information to you at this time.

I trust this is of assistance.

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations