



Office of the Head of Primary Care
Services
Community Health Organisation
Midlands Louth Meath

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22nd April 2024

Minister Seán Fleming T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re PQ – 56461/23- To ask the Minister for Health when a school dental service will be approved for children in 2nd, 3rd and 4th class in Tubber National School and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Minister Fleming,

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.

Unfortunately the dental service is experiencing a significant backlog in the numbers of children waiting for 6th class school screening. Children are now receiving their 6th class examination in 2nd or 3rd year of secondary school. This is due to the reduced number of dentists in the area, with 3 dentists currently employed (2 of who are currently on long term leave for personal reasons) and 1.6 WTE dentist vacancies in Co Offaly since September 2022.

The waiting list for 6th class in Co Offaly is below as of April 2024:

School year	Numbers remaining
2020/21	214
2021/22	1141
2022/23	933
2023/24	1100
Total	3388



Three campaigns have been run to fill these vacancies over the past two years but they have not resulted in any new employees. Since November 2023 there has been a pause on recruitment in the HSE, this has recently been lifted for dentists and the recruitment process has commenced again in this area. 1WTE agency dentist is due to commence work in Tullamore in May 2024.

Emergency dental treatment is available in Co. Offaly to all children under the age of 16 Monday to Friday.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret M.J. Kelleher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Margaret Kelleher
A/Head of Primary Care Services
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation