

4th April, 2024

Mr. Pa Daly, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 12233/24

“To ask the Minister for Health his views on the long waiting lists for child dental and orthodontic services in St. Finbarr’s County Cork, and if he plans to introduce measures to alleviate same.”

Dear Deputy Daly,

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.

The primary goal of the orthodontic service is to improve the appearance and function of misaligned or crooked teeth, with free orthodontic treatment being provided to children with the most severe orthodontic problems. Qualification for treatment is determined by nationally agreed eligibility guidelines based on an international grading system (IOTN). All referrals for the service are triaged and given a priority rating by the clinical team.

The orthodontic waiting list for Cork and Kerry is currently running at 6 years. The National Oral Health Office is successfully managing a waiting list initiative across areas of Ireland and successfully outsourced waiting lists to private providers. Unfortunately the government e-tender process has a lack of available approved private providers in Cork. Until this is resolved there will continue to be long waiting lists.

I acknowledge that this timeframe for such a service is less than desirable, and I apologise for same. This is as a consequence to a number of factors including a growth in demand for services and also the implications of resource deficit due to the present recruitment embargo. Efforts to increase resources throughout and reduce waiting times are indeed our top priority. We are actively working on strategies to address resources allocation, validation of waiting lists, streamlining processes and optimising existing workloads, ultimately working towards providing timely access for all to services.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare