



**Ceann Seirbhíse, Cúraim Príomhúil**  
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Cabhán Dún na nGall  
Liatroim Muineachán, Sligeach  
An Clochar, Sráid an Choláiste, Béal Átha  
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30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

Pauline Tully T.D.  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: PQ ref 43039/24 To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and adults on the dental appointment waiting list in County Cavan and County Monaghan; and the average waiting times for appointments in each county in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024, in tabular form.**

Dear Deputy Tully

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above PQ, which you submitted to the Integrated Healthcare Area Manager for response.

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position for Community Healthcare Cavan Monaghan.

The Cavan Monaghan HSE Dental Service for children operates as a targeted, school-linked service, whereby children in specific primary school classes are targeted for an oral health assessment and for primary care treatment arising there from. The provision of this service is a statutory requirement for the HSE.

As is the case nationally the service does not operate a waiting list system but offers oral health assessments to children in class cohorts. In an average school year cohort there are over 2200 children in Cavan Monaghan. A previous national service goal would have been to offer oral health assessments to three class cohorts in each calendar year. Children are seen at ages that correspond with dental developmental milestones to identify opportunities for timely preventive interventions such as fissure sealants and the need for restorative treatment, as well as monitoring the eruption of the permanent dentition including possible orthodontic anomalies requiring referral for HSE orthodontic assessment.

The Covid-19 Pandemic severely impacted the Dental Service with routine dental services being suspended on the advice of the National Oral Health Office (NOHO), and access to dental services nationally was restricted to emergency treatment under the terms of Statutory Instrument 121/2020 for a time. This resulted in the cancellation of hundreds of routine dental appointments and many dental staff were redeployed during the height of the pandemic. Furthermore the necessary Covid-19 mitigating factors resulted in reduced capacity in Dental Clinics.

Therefore since 2020 the Cavan Monaghan service like many areas nationally has only managed to target one class cohort namely 6th class. HSE Dental Services in Cavan Monaghan have operated with a significant shortfall of WTE for several years. This has resulted in an inevitable



delay in progress through target classes. In Cavan we are currently completing last year's 6<sup>th</sup> class (current 1<sup>st</sup> years) and in Monaghan there are a small number from the previous year (current 2<sup>nd</sup> years) to be examined. Due to a lack of Special Care dentists at present the Special Care Service for Children and Adults is an emergency only service as is the service we provide for adult medical card patients who cannot access care with private practitioner contractors. These are demand led services and therefore have no waiting lists.

The table below represents the school screening activity for the years requested.

I have indicated what class cohorts were screened in each year. For the years 2019, 2020, 2012 no children remain on waiting lists.

For the more recent years the number waiting to be screened for the 6<sup>th</sup> class cohort of that year is shown.

<b>Academic School Year Targeted.</b>	<b>2nd Class</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Class</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> class</b>	
2019/2020	Yes	No	Yes	
2020/2021	No	No	Yes	
2021/2022	No	No	Yes	
			<b>Number of Children waiting on 6<sup>th</sup> class list</b>	<b>Waiting time from date of school form returned in June of 6<sup>th</sup> class</b>
2022/2023	No	No	50 (Monaghan)	2 years 5 months
2023/2024	No	No	1,100	1 year 5 months for those remaining in Cavan & Monaghan
2024/2025	No	No	2,200	5 months

The dental service also provides oral health care where indicated through a limited dental general anaesthetic service at Cavan General Hospital one morning per week for young children and special care patients. Below are the current waiting lists by patient category.



List	Numbers	Longest Waiting Time
Paediatric Extraction only list	99	9 months
Special Care Paediatric Full Comprehensive Treatment required	33	18 months
Special Care Adults Full Comprehensive Treatment required	58	18 months

HSE Cavan Monaghan Dental Services are fully committed to providing oral health care to all eligible patients, however it is important to note that the service must be delivered within the resource allocation and funding available, with the level of activity and associated costs being managed in a way that ensures people with the greatest need are supported within the overall expenditure of the delivery of services while not exceeding the available funding allocated. The service is continuing to examine opportunities to prioritise recruitment to the above grades in this context and in order to respond to the needs of the population.

I trust that this is of assistance, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely

**Mandy Doyle**  
**Ceannasaí Seirbhíse, Cúram Príomhúil**  
**Cúram Sláinte Pobail Cabhán Dún na nGall Liatroim Muineachán Sligeach**

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