

**An Coiste um Chuntais Phoiblí**

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**Committee of Public Accounts**

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28 November 2023

**Ref: S1505 PAC33**

Mr. Bernard Gloster  
Chief Executive Officer  
Health Service Executive  
Dr. Steevens' Hospital  
Dublin, D08 W2A8

Dear Mr Gloster,

I refer to the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on 16 November 2023.

During the engagement, a number of issues were raised which require a response from your Department. It is suggested that before preparing your response to the matters raised by the Committee, you consult item 2214 on pages 50 - 51 of the transcript, which is available [here](#), for the specific details sought by the Committee.

It was agreed to request further information as follows:

1. In relation to residential and respite care, has the HSE done any work on what a multi-annual investment would look like and cost?
2. Further information regarding the number of dentists per head of population in each CHO under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).
3. Clarification from the HSE regarding the ages of children being treated under the DTSS, where the school year being completed is 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
4. The number of DTSS dentist contracts there are in County Laois and in each of the 6 counties covered under CHO8.
5. The budget for the current year for CHO8 with the breakdown per county and the number of dentists willing to take on patients in counties Laois and Offaly.

It is requested that any pdf attachments should be in a machine-readable format (i.e. in a native pdf version rather than a scanned version).

If any part of your response requires the inclusion of an external or independent report, please ensure that you have the consent of the report authors to allow for it to be published on the Oireachtas website.

The Committee requests that this information be forwarded within ten working days of the date of this letter. A response by email only is preferred. There is no requirement to also send a response in hard copy. Please use the reference number of this correspondence in your reply.

If you have any queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*C Smyth*

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Catherine Smyth  
Committee Secretariat, Committee of Public Accounts  
01 - 618 3016



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**13/12/2023**

Ms Catherine Smyth,  
Committee Secretariat,  
Public Accounts Committee,  
Leinster House,  
Dublin 2.

**Re: Ref (S1505 PAC33)**

Dear Catherine,

I refer to your recent correspondence to Mr. Bernard Gloster, Chief Executive Officer, Health Service Executive, regarding the following number of issues:

1. In relation to residential and respite care, has the HSE done any work on what a multi-annual investment would look like and cost?
2. Further information regarding the number of dentists per head of population in each CHO under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).
3. Clarification from the HSE regarding the ages of children being treated under the DTSS, where the school year being completed is 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
4. The number of DTSS dentist contracts there are in County Laois and in each of the 6 counties covered under CHO8.
5. The budget for the current year for CHO8 with the breakdown per county and the number of dentists willing to take on patients in counties Laois and Offaly.

Please find below for the attention of the Public Accounts Committee members a briefing note on these matters as requested.

If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ray Mitchell'.

**Ray Mitchell**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**Parliamentary Affairs Division**

## Briefing Note for the Public Accounts Committee

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1. In relation to residential and respite care, has the HSE done any work on what a multi-annual investment would look like and cost?

### Multi-annual Investment for Residential and Respite Services

The HSE has contributed to the development by Government of the Capacity Review of the Disability Sector (2020) and the draft Disability Action Plan 2023 – 2026. These two documents underscore a unique opportunity to strategically invest in supports that deliver on the HSE Corporate Plan 2021-2024 commitment to reimagine and reform the disability sector; make inroads on unmet needs for services; and deliver the most responsive, person-centred services achievable.

The Action Plan for Disability Services 2023 - 2026 was drafted under the auspices of the Department of Health at the request of Minister Donnelly, following the publication of the Disability Capacity Review in 2021. It is due to be published shortly by DCEDIY, who's aegis it is now under, following the Transfer of Functions. An interdepartmental working group, which included the HSE, developed the detailed Action Plan, which sets out the first phase of work over the 2023-2026 period to build the necessary capacity. The aims of the Action Plan are to:

- a) Build the capacity of disability support services to meet changing needs, and to improve timely access to services.
- b) Do the groundwork to tackle constraints on development of services.
- c) Strengthen the focus on individualised services and supports to enable people with disabilities live a life of their choosing, in the community.
- d) Begin the realignment of services to deliver better value, with a particular focus on early intervention.

Implicit in the Disability Action Plan is the need for multi-annual funding to enable forward planning, particularly in relation to residential and respite services. In this regard, the HSE has provided detailed demand projections and detailed costing information in respect of residential and respite placements.

The demand for full-time residential placements within designated centres is extremely high and further investment is needed. The Disability Capacity Review projected a need for a minimum of an additional 1,900 residential places by 2032 under a minimum projection and an extra 3,900 in order to return to levels of provision prior to the beginning of the 2008 recession.

With regard to centre-based respite, the Disability Capacity Review informs of up to €10 million in additional provision per year is required (20% additional quantum – 26,200 approx. additional overnights per year). The HSE will continue to work with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to highlight the growing need for respite services for people with a disability and to emphasise the need for additional funding to meet this need.

The Disability Capacity Review estimated that there would need to be an increase of €550m to €1000m between 2018 and 2032 to meet unmet need and address demographic change. Between 2018 and 2023, the financial allocation to specialist disability services has grown by around €700m, however much of this has gone to meet cost increases due to pay awards and other cost inflation in maintaining existing levels of service. Another factor has been the increased complexity of need of those already in services, and the increased cost of delivering their services.

The focus of this Action Plan is on building underlying capacity in services, recognising that cost increases from year to year are likely to occur as a result of inflation, and would be budgeted for separately.

By building residential service capacity to enable planned provision of needed residential places, rather than spot-purchase of places in response to emergencies, it is expected that service needs can be met in a more cost-effective way.

It is estimated that spending would need to rise by over a quarter once the full year cost of new measures are fully in place. Furthermore, significant extra capital investment will be required to provide the housing necessary to scale-up the provision of residential services.

- The allocation for current expenditure on specialist community-based disability services for 2023 is €2,540m, a major increase on the €2,029.1m expenditure in 2020.
- Over this period, there has been extra funding for children's services, for new day service placements for school leavers, for additional expenditure on respite services, additional personal assistance and home support hours, new residential places, and continuing progress in moving people from congregated care settings to the community.

The table below sets out the new measures provided for in Budget 2023 for residential and respite services, alongside the identified unmet need in that area to give a sense of the gap between what is required and what is currently being provided for. Included also is what is proposed in this Action Plan to help bridge that gap.

**Table 5.1 – Current capacity, unmet need and additional planned capacity.**

	<b>Current capacity (Expected service levels end-2023)</b>	<b>Unmet need</b>	<b>Additional capacity planned under Action Plan 2024-2026</b>
<b>Residential</b>			
Residential Places	8,305	1,200 profiled by HSE need residential care	900 new places
Congregated settings	73 moves planned 2023	c.1,900 remain	500 to move to community places
U65 Transfers from Nursing Homes	43 moves planned in 2023	c. 1,300	260 moves
<b>Respite</b>			
Nos availing	5,758	Minimum of 2,000; however only 25% of those at home with ID now get any respite, and fewer for other disability	Maximise use of existing facilities, expanding provision in under-served areas, and further developing alternative respite options with increased funding envelope
<b>Intensive support packages to prevent emergency residential placements</b>	447 packages in place (an increase of 25 packages over 2022 target)	786 in need of emergency residential place	550 packages

## 2. Further information regarding the number of dentists per head of population in each CHO under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

The DTSS is an adult medical card dental scheme where dental treatments are provided to medical cardholders by contracted dentists. The table below provides the details requested. The total population per CHO is taken from the 2022 census for all ages.

The DTSS eligible population is taken from the PCERS published data for November 2023- access to treatment under the DTSS requires the patient to be over 16 and hold a current medical card. The number of DTSS contractors per CHO is calculated from the August data, due to issues relating to industrial action by Fórsa.

The data is presented in two forms: contractors per total population, and contractors per DTSS eligible population. As access to the scheme is limited, there is a significant difference when the number of contractors is provided per eligible population. For example in CHO 6, the total population is 407,333, with only 17% having DTSS eligibility. The DTSS eligible population to contractors ranges from 974-2402, with an average of 1598.

	CHO Total Population Census 2022				DTSS eligible population (over 16 with medical card) Nov 23				
	Population All Ages		Number of DTSS contractors Nov 23	CHO Population per Contractor		DTSS eligible population	Number of DTSS contractors Nov 23	DTSS eligible per contractor	% of CHO population eligible under DTSS
CHO Area 1 Total	419473		104	4033		136,505	104	1313	33%
CHO Area 2 Total	485966		88	5522		137,511	88	1563	28%
CHO Area 3 Total	415643		73	5694		113,772	73	1559	27%
CHO Area 4 Total	740614		194	3818		188,896	194	974	26%
CHO Area 5 Total	547136		77	7106		164,074	77	2131	30%
CHO Area 6 Total	407333		32	12729		67,504	32	2110	17%
CHO Area 7 Total	773680		90	8596		162,503	90	1806	21%
CHO Area 8 Total	678528		73	9295		175,353	73	2402	26%
CHO Area 9 Total	680766		74	9200		139,920	74	1891	21%
Grand Total	5149139		805	6396		1,286,038	805	1598	25%

### 3. Clarification from the HSE regarding the ages of children being treated under the DTSS, where the school year being completed is 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

The DTSS is an adult medical card scheme for medical cardholders over the age of 16. Children up to the age of 16 (both medical card and non-medical cardholders) access dental treatment through the HSE Community Dental Service. The table below provides details per county of the areas where the children from school years 2019/2021 (sixth class only) are being provided with care, and includes the age range at September 2023 (there is a 2 year age range in each school year).

Number on 6 <sup>th</sup> class W/L	Laois	Offaly	Age range at Sept 2023
2019/2020	1030	0	15-17
2020/2021	1717	926	14-16
2021/2022	1541	1204	13-15
2022/2023	1503	1004	12-14

**4. The number of DTSS dentist contracts there are in County Laois and in each of the 6 counties covered under CHO8.**

The table below provides the number of DTSS contractors in each of the CHO 8 counties. Availability of appointments fluctuates according to the daily capacity of the practices. Informal enquiries indicate that a number of practices are not currently taking on new patients; however, this is subject to change.

<b>WESTMEATH</b>	18
<b>LONGFORD</b>	10
<b>LAOIS</b>	1
<b>OFFALY</b>	9
<b>MEATH</b>	13
<b>LOUTH</b>	17

**5. The budget for the current year for CHO8 with the breakdown per county and the number of dentists willing to take on patients in counties Laois and Offaly.**

We would not hold information on DTSS Dentists who are not taking on new patients. The DTSS budget is held as a single national budget and is not subdivided into CHO areas. The amount of money spent on treatments is reported by geographical area based on the medical cardholders CHO. The table below lists the November published data from PCERS on the year to date spend by CHO, with available further geographical divisions listed. The 2023 Budget for the Scheme is €68,207,230

CHO Area	LHO Area	YTD
CHO Area 1	Cavan / Monaghan	2,604,525.27 €
	Donegal	4,502,827.86 €
	Sligo / Leitrim	1,165,705.19 €
<b>CHO Area 1 Total</b>		<b>8,273,058.32 €</b>
CHO Area 2	Galway	2,568,029.80 €
	Mayo	1,396,294.66 €
	Roscommon	651,606.00 €
<b>CHO Area 2 Total</b>		<b>4,615,930.46 €</b>
CHO Area 3	Clare	1,055,177.01 €
	Limerick	3,273,943.14 €
	North Tipp./East Limerick	1,241,630.93 €

<b>CHO Area 3 Total</b>		<b>5,570,751.08 €</b>
CHO Area 4	Cork - North Lee	<b>3,367,424.40 €</b>
	Cork - South Lee	<b>2,440,186.55 €</b>
	Kerry	<b>1,349,378.44 €</b>
	North Cork	<b>1,370,930.92 €</b>
	West Cork	<b>858,201.12 €</b>
<b>CHO Area 4 Total</b>		<b>9,386,121.43 €</b>
CHO Area 5	Carlow/Kilkenny	<b>1,836,549.24 €</b>
	South Tipperary	<b>2,058,346.97 €</b>
	Waterford	<b>1,826,705.34 €</b>
	Wexford	<b>1,993,030.95 €</b>
<b>CHO Area 5 Total</b>		<b>7,714,632.50 €</b>
CHO Area 6	Dublin South East	<b>723,062.40 €</b>
	Dun Laoghaire	<b>544,221.64 €</b>
	Wicklow	<b>1,206,551.66 €</b>
<b>CHO Area 6 Total</b>		<b>2,473,835.70 €</b>
CHO Area 7	Dublin South City	<b>1,319,706.38 €</b>
	Dublin South West	<b>2,115,777.80 €</b>
	Dublin West	<b>1,937,373.13 €</b>
	Kildare / West Wicklow	<b>1,784,260.72 €</b>
<b>CHO Area 7 Total</b>		<b>7,157,118.03 €</b>
CHO Area 8	Laois / Offaly	<b>1,707,951.30 €</b>
	Longford / Westmeath	<b>2,209,924.68 €</b>
	Louth	<b>1,887,304.55 €</b>
	Meath	<b>1,921,965.55 €</b>
<b>CHO Area 8 Total</b>		<b>7,727,146.08 €</b>
CHO Area 9	Dublin North Central	<b>1,890,715.99 €</b>
	North Dublin	<b>1,830,669.27 €</b>
	North West Dublin	<b>2,179,537.97 €</b>
<b>CHO Area 9 Total</b>		<b>5,900,923.23 €</b>
<b>National</b>		<b>58,819,516.83 €</b>

Health Service Executive  
December 2023