

9<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**BY EMAIL**

Our Ref: FOI 1967

Dear [REDACTED],

Your request for information was received 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to child tooth extraction and tooth decay within Northern Ireland.

Please find this information, below.

**Q1). Broken down for each of the last five financial years, please outline the number of teeth extracted from children in Northern Ireland. Please break this down as to whether these were baby teeth or adult teeth that were extracted.**

Figures are provided separately for extractions by primary care dental practitioners in the General Dental Service (Table 1.1) and by the Community Dental Service (Table 1.2).

Table 1.1 Number of teeth extracted in Children in the General Dental Service by financial year  
Source: FPS Dental Payment System

Financial Year	Teeth extracted from Children; <i>Deciduous &amp; Permanent</i>
2017-18	30,081
2018-19	28,882
2019-20	29,344
2020-21	14,451
2021-22	21,845



- Treatment codes for extractions are all 21, 22 and 52 codes except 2121, 2211, 2221 and 5206 (See SDR for more details <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/2069.htm>).
- Treatment code 2211 (Fraenectomy) and code 2221 (Other oral surgery and more complex operations justifying higher fees) are included in the annual and quarterly dental published statistics for dental extractions. They have not been included in these figures, as whilst categorised as an oral surgery procedure, a fraenectomy does not involve the extraction of any teeth and code 2221 is largely used for non-extraction oral surgery procedures.
- No information is recorded in the treatment codes as to whether deciduous teeth or permanent teeth have been extracted.
- Teeth may be extracted for a number of reasons, not just tooth decay e.g. orthodontic cases in 12-17 year olds could require extraction of likely decay free teeth.
- Children are those under 18 at the time of treatment.
- Count of individual teeth extracted per visit. Based on paid treatments and information supplied by dentist making the claim.
- On 23rd March 2020, general dental practitioners (GDPs) were advised to continue to see patients who did not meet the COVID-19 case definition and who required urgent dental care which could be provided using non-aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) however all routine dental treatment was to be postponed. In addition, 5 Trust-based Urgent Dental Care centres were opened at the beginning of April 2020. From 29th June 2020, non-urgent dental care was provided under Phase 2 but AGPs were still prohibited. It was decided to offer a fast-track option to move to Phase 3 from 1 July 2020 onwards for those practices that are able to demonstrate that they meet all the necessary standards to safely offer AGPs and non-urgent/routine care.
- Information is only available for those dental practices and dentists who have made arrangements with the SPPG (previously HSCB) to provide health service dentistry.
- Excludes all private work and any work carried out by Trust hospitals and Community Dental Services.
- Financial year relates to when claim was paid, this is not necessarily the same year as when the treatment took place.
- Figures for 2022/23 will be available following release of the 'FPS General Dental Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23' due for release on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

Table 1.2 Number of teeth extracted from Children under General Anaesthetic in the Community Dental Service by financial year  
Source: Annual General Anaesthesia (GA) Trust Returns supplied by DOH/ Strategic Planning and Performance Group

Financial Year	Deciduous teeth extracted	Permanent teeth extracted
2017-18	20,566	2,469
2018-19	19,412	2,528
2019-20	19,097	2,623
2020-21	7,952	1,089
2021-22	11,262	1,771

- For some patients, because of their age or special needs, they are unable to undergo routine dental care such as extractions or fillings in the usual way and they may need to have a general anaesthetic (GA) to receive their dental care. The figures in Table 1.2 relate to dental extractions under general anaesthetic in the HSC Trust Community Dental Services across Northern Ireland.
- Extractions performed under a local anaesthetic (LA) or a relative analgesia (RA) in a Community Dental Service or Trust Hospital are not included in these figures.
- Extractions performed under GA in Community Dental Services can be for tooth decay, trauma, supernumerary teeth, impeded eruption and tooth structure defects such as Molar Incisor Hypomineralisation.

A separate FOI request would need to be made to individual Trusts in order to obtain figures on extractions done with a LA or a RA in the Community Dental Service or Trust Hospital clinics.

**Q2). Broken down for each of the last five financial years, please outline the number of unique children treated for dental extraction - please provide a further breakdown of this by age of child e.g. 0, 1-4, 5-9 etc**

Table 2.1 Number of unique children treated for dental extraction in the General Dental Service by financial year  
Source: FPS Dental Payment System

Description	Age < 1 Patients	Age 1 - 4 Patients	Age 5 - 9 Patients	Age 10 - 13 Patients	Age 14 - 17 Patients
2017-18	4	137	5,225	8,749	3,628
2018-19	*	109	4,940	8,728	3,526
2019-20	*	108	4,907	8,721	3,497
2020-21	-	91	2,757	4,164	2,112
2021-22	*	77	3,822	6,213	3,339

- Treatment codes for extractions are all 21, 22 and 52 codes except 2121, 2211 and 5206 (See SDR for more details <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/2069.htm>).
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- Figures less than 3 have been suppressed (\*) to protect patient confidentiality.
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offer a fast-track option to move to Phase 3 from 1 July 2020 onwards for those practices that are able to demonstrate that they meet all the necessary standards to safely offer AGPs and non-urgent/routine care.

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I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,  
Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

**Website:** [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)  
**Phone:** 0303 123 1113  
**Email:** [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)  
**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office  
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

*Karen Bailey*

**Karen Bailey**  
Chief Executive

## **Response to FOI 1967**

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