

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.11409.23
<b>Subject:</b>	Orthodontic waiting times
<b>Date of Request:</b>	31 March 2023

**Requested:**

1. Could you please send me the current waiting times for orthodontic care for children under the age of 18 within your health board.
2. Could you also send me the figures for waiting times within your health board over the past 5 years please.

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does not hold the information exactly as requested. However, whilst operating in accordance with the Section 45 Freedom of Information Code of Practice, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance, and therefore provides the accessible information it holds in response to your request below.

1. The UHB confirms that since April 2019, orthodontic referrals have been managed by the Dental Referral Management Centre (DRMC), utilising an electronic system that general dental practitioners use to submit electronic referrals to specialist services.

As at 1 April 2023, there were one thousand eight hundred and thirty five (1,835) patients with routine referrals on the waiting list for Primary Care Orthodontic Services. The estimated waiting time for routine referrals is currently three (3) years. However, patients are allocated for treatment based on their clinical need rather than chronologically.

Please note:- this does not include patients who have urgent referrals or patients requiring secondary care (hospital) treatment; the waiting time for these services is considerably shorter and the wait is estimated to be within six (6) months.

2. The UHB is unable to provide historical waiting time data due to the DRMC's list constantly updating when orthodontic providers accept patients for treatment, and due to more referrals being added.

However, the UHB can provide the number of routine orthodontic referrals received, by age range, during the 2019/20 to 2022/23 financial years, within the table below.

Financial year	Under 11	11 - 16	16 and over
2019/20	222	1,095	132
2020/21	113	336	39
2021/22	179	922	66
2022/23	280	1,446	80

The UHB confirms that one thousand and ninety one (1,091) referrals were received in the 2018/19 financial year. However, as the electronic system was not implemented until April 2019, it is unable to provide a breakdown of the number of referrals by age range.

Additionally, prior to the implementation of the electronic system in April 2019, the estimated waiting time for routine referrals was five (5) years.