

Date as postmark

H&C

Parents / Guardians of:

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you will be aware your child has been referred to the Alveolar Bone Grafting Clinic for an assessment following a consultation at the Joint Cleft Palate Clinic. We are writing to apologise for the delay and to advise that this issue is due to current vacancies and recruitment challenges.

As you will appreciate the specialist care that is required for your son/daughter is delivered by a team that includes a number of key individuals with exceptional skills and expertise. For the last number of months there has been a vacancy in the team that the HSC has been unable to attract suitable candidates to. In the short term it was possible to cover this post with additional sessions from current staff. Unfortunately however, due to staff changes, this has not been an option in recent months. In an effort to attract suitable applicants to the post, the cleft team has been working with the Department of Health to develop a new job plan and fund additional consultant sessions for the vacancy. I am pleased to inform you that this work has almost completed and is expected to result in the recruitment of a new consultant orthodontist which would allow the reinstatement of the ABG service in 2025.

The cleft team and all of us involved in the care of your child genuinely appreciate this is causing significant concern and frustration for both parents and children and that any delay can have a considerable impact on patients.

We understand the current situation and lengthy waiting times are not the standard of care that you expect from the HSC but please be assured that the team are working to resolve the situation as soon as possible. Your child remains under the care of the Belfast Trust.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

N.I CLEFT LIP & PALATE TEAM