



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Competition Authority finds a lack of competition in dental services is pushing up prices in Ireland**

The Competition Authority today published its final report on competition in dental services in Ireland. The report finds that competition in dental services is restricted and discouraged by an outdated system of regulation.

According to the Chairperson of the Competition Authority Bill Prasifka; *"Consumers are paying too much for dental services in Ireland. This is not surprising given the rules that are currently in place. Consumers are in the dark when it comes to shopping around for a dentist. Why shouldn't dentists advertise and compete on the same terms as any other business? The Competition Authority is calling for significant reform which places the interests of consumers before those of the profession."*

Among the report's key findings are:

- Dentists are not allowed to advertise their prices;
- Dentists are not allowed to offer discounts;
- Dentists are not allowed to canvas for each other's customers;
- Consumers in Ireland do not have the option of going directly to qualified dental hygienists and clinical dental technicians for dental hygiene services and dentures;
- The number of dentists and orthodontists being trained in Ireland has not kept pace with growing demand.

These restrictions on competition stem from the Dentists Act 1985 and from the rules of the Dental Council, which is largely composed of dentists.

#### **For further information contact:**

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## **Recommendations**

The Competition Authority makes 12 recommendations to address the competition problems in the dental profession. These recommendations will lead to a modern system of regulation where:

- Consumers are informed of the price of dental services;
- Consumers are aware of their entitlements and the availability of services in their area;
- Consumers have more choice regarding from whom they get dental services;
- A sufficient supply of dentists and orthodontists;
- The public interest is at the heart of the regulatory system.

The recommendations are designed to promote and enhance competition in dental services so that consumers get value for money while at the same time their health and safety is protected.

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