PQ 32397/18  To ask the Minister for Health if he will report on the widespread dealing of cocaine in the Dublin city area; the treatment services available; the location of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter -Róisín Shortall

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

In recent months local HSE funded drug service providers in the North Inner City have been reporting increased cocaine/crack use in Dublin City Centre. In response to the upward trend in cocaine use and cocaine-associated deaths in Ireland, an initiative, “Cocaine – Reduce the Harms Information Campaign”, was launched in June 2018 by Minister Catherine Byrne, who has responsibility for the National Drug Strategy. This initiative was a result of a partnership between the HSE National Social inclusion Office and the Ana Liffey Drug Project and was designed to raise awareness regarding the dangers of using cocaine (powder and crack), and how to reduce the harms associated with snorting, smoking or injecting. The HSE Social Inclusion approach is health led and aims to reduce harm through information sharing and works in collaboration with the North Inner City Local Drug Task Force and the South Inner City Local Drug Task Force through Section 39 funding arrangements.

The Ana Liffey Drugs Project and Merchants Quay Ireland are the main cocaine treatment specific service providers in the Dublin City area. Both organisations, which are funded through Section 39 Service Arrangements with the HSE Addiction Services, are working in collaboration with the An Garda Siochana, Dublin City Council and HSE Social Inclusion. An assertive outreach/case management approach is being provided by both organisations in Dublin City Centre. These Assertive Case Management Teams work with people with multi-substance issues and have a primary focus towards crack cocaine smokers and injectors.

The Ana Liffey Drug Project is based at 51 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1, and provide services primarily for the North side of the city. The Project provides a range of psychosocial, harm reduction and medical services to people who use cocaine (both in powder and crack cocaine form). The services provided by the Ana Liffey Drug Project from Middle Abbey Street are as follows:
• Stabilisation Programme (using the Reduce the Use model of intervention, among others)
• Treatment Options Group
• Nursing and Medical Services
• Needle and Syringe programme (providing sterile crack pipes)
• Outreach Team

Ana Liffey also have two Assertive Case Management Teams (ACMT); one team of which is based on Parnell Street, Dublin 1, with the second team based at Liberty House, Sean McDermott Street, Flat Complex, Dublin 1.

Merchants Quay Ireland is based at Riverbank, Merchants Quay, beside O’Donovan Rossa Bridge, Dublin 8, and provide services for the South side area of South Dublin Inner City. The services provided by Merchants Quay to people who use cocaine (powder/crack cocaine form prepared for smoking & injection), from their premises at Riverbank are as follows:
• Primary Healthcare Service (GP, General Nurse, Dentistry, Counselling, Mental Health team)
• Needle Exchange and Safer Injection interventions (provision of sterile crack pipes)
• Stablisation Day Programme
• Keyworking & Case Management Support
• Youth Support Workers (18-25 age group)
• Night Café, Freephone, Advice & Information
• Treatment Options, (residential detoxification)

Merchants Quay also have one large Assertive Case Management Team which is also based at Riverbank, Merchants Quay.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Dónal Cassidy
General Manager
Social Inclusion/Addiction Services