



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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9th May 2019

Deputy Pat Buckley TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 15525/19 To ask the Minister for Health the rate of referral to additional mental health services following initial assessment for children and adolescents by the service they were referred to, the region and CHO. -Pat Buckley
Question:

Dear Deputy Buckley,

The Health Service Executive 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. I would like to apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Interventions to support young people in distress and those with mental health problems have been developed at a number of different levels within the system. When young people are referred to services which do not meet their needs they can be signposted to other more appropriate services. This may be done by the service who receive the referral. In addition it is important to assist referral agents to make appropriate referrals which can be aided through accurate description of services. The CAMHS SOP attempted to do this. The revised document which was informed by various stakeholders is due to be published in the coming months.

We now know from the evidence base that a number of young people wish to avail of information and support around mental health through online channels. HSE Mental health services have recently invested resources into a digital mental health service improvement project. This project is now progressing enhanced online mental health services with engaging online content, signposting of supports and services and an active listening service based on the provision of text support. This new digital resource will meet significant public mental health need by responding to changing help-seeking behaviours and opening up awareness of the fullest possible range of supports for people experiencing mental health difficulties.

Primary Care level

The HSE fund Jigsaw to provide early intervention mental health services which focus on the needs of 12-25 year olds. Their early intervention model provides tangible supports for young people at primary care level who have mild and emerging mental health difficulties. There are 13 Jigsaw Services in communities across Ireland providing mental health support to young people.



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In addition to this the HSE have psychology services within primary care. These services are available to young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. In 2018, 114 new Assistant Psychologists and 20 psychologists were recruited to assist Primary Care Teams in their provision of psychological intervention for young people. These posts are designed to ensure that young people whose clinical needs are at primary care level receive appropriate intervention and do not end up on secondary care waiting lists due to lack of appropriate assessment and resources in primary care.

Specialist mental health services

Young people with moderate to severe mental health difficulties are referred to specialist mental health services by primary care practitioners eg GPs, psychologists etc. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provide mental health service to those aged up to 18 years, who have reached the threshold for a diagnosis of moderate to severe mental health disorders that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health team.

Over 90% of mental health needs can be successfully treated within a primary care setting, with a need for less than 10% to be referred to specialist community-based mental health services. Of this number, approximately 1% have needs that require inpatient care and nine out of every ten of these admissions are voluntary.

The HSE does not keep figures on the rate of referral to additional mental health services following initial assessment for children and adolescents by the service they were referred to, the region and CHO.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sinead Reynolds
General Manager Mental Health Services