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8th January 2020

Deputy Darragh O'Brien,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 50519/19 - To ask the Minister for Health the status of plans to improve mental health and primary care services for homeless persons; and the specific budget allocation in each of the years 2016 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form

-Darragh O'Brien

Dear Deputy O'Brien,

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 response.

Social inclusion works across a range of statutory services in partnership with the community and voluntary sectors, to address health inequalities and to improve access to health services for socially disadvantaged groups, including homeless persons.

It is recognised that over recent years there has been unparalleled growth in the scale of homelessness in Ireland, cumulating in the number of homeless people in emergency accommodation exceeding 10,000 for the first time in February 2019. As of September 2019 there were 10,397 people homeless across Ireland. This figure includes adults and children. Of particular note is that the number of homeless families has increased significantly. More than one in three people in emergency accommodation are a child (3,873). In order to more effectively respond to this changing profile of service users and the associated challenges as part of a whole-of-government approach, the HSE is providing support to families in homelessness through public health nursing and targeted primary care services. In Dublin, where the challenges are most prevalent, a multi-disciplinary HSE Healthlinks for homeless team acts as a single point of contact between the local authorities and the HSE community based public health nurse service which ensures that families with children aged under four years can continue to link with child health and welfare services in line with Best Health for Children.

More specific information on the HSE's plan to improve the mental health and primary care services for homeless persons can be found in HSE's National Service plan 2020 released December 17th 2019, under social inclusion services.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/national-service-plan-2020.pdf>

The following outlines the total HSE funding provided to homelessness between 2015 and 2019:

2015 €30,906,637
2016 €31,539,472
2017 €32,630,830 (allocation)*
2018 €36,000,000 (allocation)
2019 €36,000,000 (allocation)

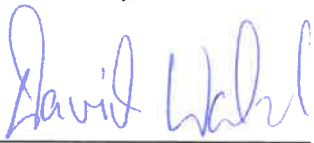
* 2017 figures & data have been used for the below summary baseline which is taken from the more comprehensive data available. More in depth analysis will be carried out over the coming period to further link funding provided to activity, cost, quality and outcomes. The figures provided are based on WTE estimates of avg staff cost of €50k and are provided to illustrate the scale of the service provided in practice higher levels of head count may be in place as staff work variable hours with some sessional services.

2017 Funding	€m	%
CHO 1	725,784	2%
CHO 2	3,629,282	11%
CHO 3	3,040,420	9%
CHO 4	5,012,058	15%
CHO 5	882,200	3%
CHO 6	1,105,876	3%
CHO 7	10,603,536	32%
CHO 8	746,999	2%
CHO 9	6,884,675	21%
Total	32,630,830	100%

Please note that due to the broad range of services availed of by homeless people, a range of general health services including: acute hospital inpatient/outpatient services; Primary Care services, HSE addiction and mental health services etc., are not including within this funding.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



David Walsh,
National Director,
Community Operations