



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an tUas. Pat Bennett,
Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht Cúram
Sláinte Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú, An Mhí
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte,
Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar Ardáin, An
Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh Fhailí.

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t: **057 9359787/774**

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15th January, 2020

Mr. Gerry Adams T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: Parliamentary Question – 51158/19

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the Midlands Louth Meath CHO Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2018-2022 does not contain specific measures to address substance misuse or support those suffering addiction and their families; the reason this is the case; if the matter will be addressed in future plans; and the measures he will take in the interim - Gerry Adams.

Dear Deputy Adams,

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 outline the position as follows.

The Healthy Ireland Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025 guided the development of a national implementation plan specific to the Health Service – 'Healthy Ireland in the Health Services'. One of the actions of this plan was as follows – 'Each CHO will publish its own Healthy Ireland implementation Plan' and to date, all 9 CHOs have developed a Healthy Ireland implementation plan.

The CHO 8 Midlands Louth Meath Healthy Ireland Implementation plan was developed guided by the following three strategic priorities set out in the national plan:

- Health Service Reform
- Reducing the burden of Chronic Disease
- Improving Staff Health and Wellbeing

The overall objective of the plan is to work across the life course to influence the trajectory towards ill health and to address the risk factors for chronic disease which can reduce the quality of life for many people living in Ireland and their families. The plan employs a population health approach, seeking to influence people to take control of their own health to achieve the very best health outcomes throughout their lives. The plan was developed in consultation with the HSE's National Health and Wellbeing leads for policy priority briefs, including alcohol and tobacco.

A key enabler which will be critical to the implementation of the CHO Healthy Ireland plan is the roll out of the Making Every Contact Count programme. This programme is about health professionals using their routine consultation to empower and support people to make healthier choices to achieve positive health outcomes. The programme will ensure that health service personnel have the skills and confidence to recognise harmful lifestyle behaviours, that they are trained to carry out brief interventions with service users to motivate lifestyle behaviour change and to refer to support services as part of routine service delivery.

We are working also to build the capacity of teachers in Primary and Post Primary Schools to ensure that the Health and Wellbeing agenda in schools is supported. In addition, we are working to build health supportive environments in all HSE premises, workplaces and civic spaces through our partnership working with the

Local Authorities, Schools, Community and Voluntary groups and others to maximise our reach and influence.

The Midlands Louth Meath CHO Healthy Ireland Implementation plan also sets out our commitment to work with the Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Forces and local services to ensure our messages are joined up and working towards maximising our collective impact in this area.

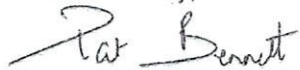
The plan lists a number of actions to address tobacco addiction (pages 44 and 45) and also includes the following actions regarding alcohol and drug use:

- **Healthy Childhood** – Action 26 (page 43) - Work with our partners in the Drug and Alcohol Regional Task Forces to support the roll out of services to under 18s and to promote www.askaboutalcohol.ie and the alcohol and drugs helpline as the main sources of information and support on alcohol. Promote www.drugs.ie as the main source of information on illegal drugs.
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 22 (page 45) – Promote screening and brief interventions through the Making Every Contact Count programme in all health and social care settings so that health professionals have the skills and confidence to recognise and address hazardous and harmful use of alcohol and drug use
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 23 (page 45) – Work with key personnel in primary care and hospital groups to deliver the key messages regarding the avoidance of alcohol during pregnancy at each contact through the provision of the askaboutalcohol alcohol and pregnancy leaflet. Advice for partners on supporting an alcohol free pregnancy will also be offered.
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 24 (page 46) - Implement the AUDIT, DUDIT or DSM V Tool when screening alcohol and/or drug use as part of the care of those with chronic illness
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 25 (page 46) – Promote www.askaboutalcohol.ie and the alcohol and drugs helpline as the main sources of information and support on alcohol. Promote www.drugs.ie as the main source of information on illegal drugs.
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 26 (page 46) – Display communications campaign materials and resources in all HSE settings to reinforce positive health messages in relation to alcohol available through healthpromotion.ie/alcohol and healthpromotion.ie/drugs
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 27 (page 46) - Promote awareness to the public and to health care professionals regarding the specific HSE referral care pathways for alcohol and substance use based on the HSE Four Tier model of service delivery.
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 28 (page 46) – Provide half day training sessions on alcohol policy using the national Alcohol Programme as a resource
- **Live Well, Age Well** – Action 29 (page 46) – Promote and disseminate information and awareness materials to teenagers and their families by:
 - Promoting and disseminating the HSE Junior Cycle Health and Wellbeing Resource of Alcohol and Drugs to Post Primary schools
 - Promoting and disseminating the HSE SPHE Senior Cycle Resource on Alcohol and Drugs to Post Primary Schools
 - Promoting and disseminating the HSE Alcohol and Drugs, A Parent's Guide, Practical Advice to Help you Communicate with your Child About Alcohol and other Drugs

As outlined, the plan adopts a population health approach to focus on raising awareness on the broad range of factors and conditions that have a strong influence on health. In addition, the National Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 'Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025' guides the development of local health services to respond to substance misuse and to support those suffering with addiction and their families.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Bennett". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Pat Bennett
Chief Officer CHO Area 8