

1st February 2019

Deputy Mick Wallace, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 3631/19

“To ask the Minister for Health the status of the open dialogue programme that started in Bantry, County Cork in September 2015; the way in which the programme works; if it has been considered a success; if it will be rolled out to other CHO teams and areas; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Wallace,

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.

Open Dialogue is an approach used with people experiencing a mental health crisis. Together with their family and social network, the service user is central, equal and included in all aspects of their care within mental health services. Open Dialogue is a “need adapted” approach, where services are centred on users' needs rather than the needs of the mental health system. Staff involved in the pilot in West Cork have undergone extensive training in the UK in this way of working.

Within this approach, the service user and their network decide on attendance, regularity, venue, focus of meetings, and decisions regarding their care. Within these Open Dialogue consultations, recovery plans are jointly developed and all discussions relating to the service user occur in their presence. There is an emphasis on strengths and resources within the individual and their network. In the Open Dialogue model a dedicated team of professionals and individuals from the service users network, chosen by the service user, work with the service user for the duration of that person's support by mental health services. All decisions and discussions occur within meetings where the service user is present, and all recovery plans are jointly developed.

The Open Dialogue approach is currently being trialled for use within the Mental Health Sector in West Cork. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is developing a research project to evaluate the Open Dialogue Programme. This local evaluation is on-going and once findings are available it will inform decisions with regard to potential for roll out to other areas.

I trust this clarifies the query raised.

Kind regards,



Ms Sinéad Glennon
Head of Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

