

12<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Deputy Martin Ferris,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 4216/19**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the reason suitably qualified counsellors and psychotherapists cannot be facilitated with special type consultation, special service or out of hours payment systems similar to general practitioners (details supplied) in County Kerry”**

**Details supplied: as the waiting time for such services in Kerry, is causing serious ill health, particularly for young people many of whom eventually access those services through pieta house and similar charitable organisations. Such a system allowing for earlier intervention will reduce the numbers of people reaching crisis**

Dear Deputy Ferris,

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.

By way of background, Mental Health Services in Ireland are provided following a tiered approach by both HSE and a number of HSE funded services. This tiered approach includes a variety of services. In relation to community provided services, Counselling and Psychotherapy Services are available through CIPC, Jigsaw, Pieta House, Samaritans and a number of smaller community and voluntary bodies who receive some funding from the HSE either locally or nationally. Specialist Mental Health Services in Kerry are provided by two Community Child and Adolescent Teams covering North and South Kerry respectively, and each of these community based teams adapts a full multi-disciplinary approach with medical, nursing, clinical Psychology, social work, occupational therapy, social care and admin staff. We acknowledge that at times some people present in crisis and require immediate assistance; this can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via GP, South Doc or the Emergency Department, University Hospital Kerry. In some instances the GP or South Doc can arrange a direct admission to the Mental Health Unit is deemed appropriate clinically. Persons experiencing a crisis often need acute medical intervention along with their mental health needs. For this reason these crisis services are based in areas with 24/7 medical cover

In addition, Mental Health Services development funding under the Program for Government (PFG) has enabled recruitment of 2 Clinical Nurse Specialists in Self Harm and a Consultant in Liaison based in the Emergency Department in University Hospital Kerry.

Kerry currently has four posts for Crisis Intervention Nurses working in Killarney, Tralee, Castleisland and Listowel respectively. These nurses are integrated members of the Community Mental Health Team, who work specifically with individuals presenting in crisis. They provide a 7 day service, as opposed to a weekend on call service as referred to above, with staff providing a one in four weekend rota.

The concept of Crisis Intervention Service is outlined in a Vision for Change (VfC, 2006). The Vision for Change does not refer specifically to a crisis team but rather speaks of crisis intervention as part of a Community Mental Health Team and indeed references the fact that it should be a multidisciplinary response.

I trust this clarifies the query raised but should you have any further queries do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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