



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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**Deputy Pat Buckley,  
Dail Eireann  
Dublin 2.**

**PQ 27650/19 - To ask the Minister for Health the model he is planning for the crisis text line service for mental health; the other models this is based on; the rationale for choosing this model; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Pat Buckley**

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 latest currently available data outlines the position.

The Crisis Text Line platform will connect texters with a volunteer who has been trained to listen, reassure and assist callers in addressing the issues of concern to them. All conversations are anonymous, unless the texter wants to give their name, and are monitored in real time by a team of qualified staff supervisors who will support volunteers to listen to and support texters. The platform uses an artificial intelligence (AI) model to scan the initial messages from texters for keywords to identify those likely to be at immediate risk and prioritise those conversations in the queue.

There is extensive research to show that increasingly younger sections of the population are more comfortable with and are more likely to use text messaging as a tool to seek help in a crisis situation. Crisis Text Line already provides free 24/7 active listening (through text) support to people in crisis in the USA (since 2013), Canada (since 2017) and the U.K. (since 2018) and will be launching in Australia, South Africa and South America in 2019/2020. As of March 26, 2019, Crisis Text Line has processed 100 million text messages in the U.S. alone.

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

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Farnan  
General Manager Mental Health Services