



18th July 2019

Deputy John Curran, TD
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ: 28980/19

To ask the Minister for Health the way in which relapse prevention and aftercare drug treatment services have been improved to date in 2019

Dear Deputy Curran,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

The two main national programmes that have been funded in the National Drugs Strategy *Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery* under this action are SMART Recovery Ireland and the Recovery Academy.

The Recovery Academy Ireland is a cooperative whose members promote and champion the concept of recovery, including people in recovery, supporters, advocates, researchers and professionals. It is a forum to promote recovery, provide support for people in recovery and their families, organise recovery activities, raise awareness about recovery, provide workshops and training on recovery, conduct research; and advocate on policy. The Academy aims to develop community awareness of the benefits of recovery. It does this by building links with existing community groups, advocating for 'recovery houses' for people who are homeless and in recovery; and supporting social initiatives aimed at people in recovery such as a recovery café. A full time Coordinator in 2018 has enabled considerable developments to be made with the Academy. See www.facebook.com/RecoveryAcademyIE/ for examples of recovery activities: Pop-up Recovery Café on 25th July at 2019 Annual Recovery Walk on 14th of September (launch on 23rd July by Dublin Lord Mayor, Paul McAuliffe).

SMART Recovery stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. It is an abstinence based peer-support programme that uses tools and techniques grounded in cognitive-behavioural principles. The programme consists of on-line and face to face peer led mutual aid meetings. There are almost 40 groups meeting weekly around the country. With the provision of national funding, SMART Recovery is establishing itself as a limited company with a view to taking on dedicated personnel to help the Board of Management drive the expansion of SMART groups nationally.



In addition to the national programmes, HSE and HSE funded drug and alcohol services incorporate aftercare and relapse prevention. For example:

- In CHO 1 Donegal all staff in HSE Addiction services have a duty to arrange aftercare for their service users whom they refer on to treatment. The HSE service continues to provide a weekly abstinence based aftercare support group for service users who have completed either one-to-one counselling or for those who have completed a residential programme. Funding (supported by the NW-RDATF) is provided for an aftercare and relapse prevention worker linked with Whiteoaks Rehab Centre and their primary role is providing supported aftercare and relapse prevention work with service users who have completed Tier 4 treatment in Whiteoaks. Both the NW-RDATF and the NE-RDATF have community outreach workers / development workers who have a remit in providing community aftercare and support for those who have completed residential treatment. Services in CHO1 also continue to avail of step-down / secondary care in centres such as Renewal and Tabor. SMART Recovery group have also been set up, one in Donegal and one in Leitrim.
- In CHO 3, after care and relapse prevention programmes are offered as part of the core service. The Mid-West Addiction services in CHO 3, in conjunction with the MWRDAF, is examining the roll out of a SMART Recovery programme in 2019.
- CHO 4 has introduced SMART Recovery across Cork and Kerry. Relapse Prevention and aftercare is an integral part of the combined Initial & Comprehensive Assessment, Consent & Confidentiality and Care Plan for drug and alcohol, homeless, and prison services now in use. This document has been piloted over 18 months and is endorsed by Rebuilding Ireland, the Dept. of Health and the HSE National Social Inclusion office. Over the next 9 months, the document will be used across 4 regions nationally (circa 10,000 assessments) after which people will have the opportunity to feedback on usability.

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

Yours sincerely,



Joseph Doyle
National Planning Specialist