



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte  
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.  
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Mental Health Service  
St Loman's Hospital, Palmerstown Dublin 20  
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1<sup>st</sup> May 2019

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan TD  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 30464/19 - To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which he remains satisfied regarding the adequacy of support services for children and teenagers identified as having a tendency to self-harm; the number of instances of such vulnerable young persons his attention has been drawn to in the past two years; the extent to which it has been possible to make a positive intervention; if particular deficiencies have been identified in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Bernard J. Durkan**

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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 outlines the position.

Young people who self-harm have access to a wide range of services provided by our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services both at inpatient and community based services. In addition to this the National Clinical Programme for the assessment and management of patients who present to emergency department following a self-harm act has been operational since 2014. Today the clinical programme is delivered in 24 out of 26 Emergency Departments in hospital across the country. Later this year the clinical programme will be live in the 3 National Paediatric Hospitals in Dublin. Specialist nurses are currently been recruited.

Where a person under 18 years presents to the Emergency Department following self-harm it is important that person receives a compassionate empathic response from the ED staff. They should receive a biopsychosocial assessment from a suitable qualified mental health professional prior to discharge from hospital. In children under 16 years of age it is recommended they should be admitted overnight to a paediatric ward. The paediatric team should ensure the child receives a biopsychosocial assessment prior to discharge from hospital. This recommendation follows international best practice such as NICE recommendations in the UK.

At present, due to differing levels of staffing for CAMHS teams around the country there is an inconsistent response for children in the EDs. In some hospitals the child will be assessed by a Non Consultant Hospital Doctor, who can then discuss the case with the CAMHS consultant on call. In other services, there may be no CAMHS Consultant on call and the paediatric team will be advised to wait until the CAMHS consultant is available.



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Liaison Psychiatry teams are available in the 3 Dublin Paediatric Hospitals. In Temple Street Childrens University Hospital this service is provided in conjunction with the local mental health service for 24 hours, 7 days a week. In Crumlin and Tallaght Childrens University Hospitals, the liaison psychiatry service is available Monday to Friday 9-5. Outside those hours children are assessed by the paediatricians and admitted to a paediatric ward.

In Cork University Hospital, there is a liaison psychiatric nurse available Monday to Friday 9-5. This nurse is supported in her work by a Consultant from CAMHS. Out of hours an NCHD completes assessments and the CAMHS consultants provide input.

The vision of the national clinical programme is to ensure that every individual who presents to the Emergency Department following an act of self-harm or with suicidal ideation will receive a timely, expert assessment of their needs, and be connected to appropriate next care. The individual and their family are valued and supported, by staff who themselves are valued and supported.

The GP should be regarded as the first point of medical contact for all persons with mental health disorders, including self-harm, with the exception of those requiring Emergency Department care for a physical health problem.

With due regard to the number of instances/presentations within the past two years, the HSE does not collect the information as requested. The Hospital Inpatient Enquiry (HIPE) System is a health information system designed to collect medical and administrative data regarding discharges from acute public hospitals. HIPE only includes information on admitted patients, inpatient and day cases; it does not collect information on Emergency Department or Outpatient activity.

I attach for your information the National Office Suicide Prevention Report for 2017 and the National Self Harm Registry Interim Report January to June 2018 which gives some information on the number of presentations by young persons to the Emergency Department.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/nosp-annual-report-2017.pdf>

[https://www.nsrh.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2018-Interim-Report-Jan\\_June-NSHRI.pdf](https://www.nsrh.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2018-Interim-Report-Jan_June-NSHRI.pdf)

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

Yours sincerely,



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sinead Reynolds'.

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Dr Sinead Reynolds  
General Manager Mental Health Services