



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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20/08/2019

Deputy James Browne
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2.

PQ Number: 31055/19

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age that died by suicide in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. James Browne

Dear Deputy Browne,

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.

Background on suicide statistics

In the first instance, it should be noted that in Ireland, the decision as to whether someone has died by suicide, is a legal decision made by Coroners, *not* a medical decision made by doctors or the HSE.

Following the Coronal investigation, inquest and registration processes, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) publishes national mortality data, including data on deaths by suicide. The purpose of the CSO (mandated under the Statistics Act 1993) is to impartially collect, analyse and make available statistics about Ireland's people, society and economy.

- All CSO data on suicide deaths is publically available on their website www.cso.ie.
- For an overview, you can read our own briefing document on the most recent CSO data, here: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/nosp-briefing-on-suicide-figures.html>

Annual data from the CSO is delivered in three stages;

1. Provided firstly by year of registration – “provisional”
2. Revised later, by year of occurrence – “official”
3. Revised later again, to include “late registrations”.

Data for recent years is not easily comparable like-for-like. This is because data for the following years is each at a different stage;

- 2019 – no data available yet
- 2018 – provisional data available
- 2017 – provisional data available



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- 2016 – official data is available but *excludes* late registrations
- 2015 – official data is available but *excludes* late registrations
- 2014 – official data is available and *includes* late registrations

The number of children under 18 years of age that died by suicide in 2018

On 31st May the Central Statistics released provisional data for 2018, which should be viewed in the context of limitations outlined above. The release included the following;

| Age | All | < 1 | 1-4 | 5-14 | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65-74 | 75-84 | 85 > |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Number of deaths by suicide | 352 | - | - | 2 | 45 | 70 | 70 | 74 | 61 | 21 | 6 | 3 |

The full set of CSO 2018 data can be viewed here: <https://cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-vsyst/vitalstatisticsyearlysummary2018/>

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

Yours sincerely,

Sinead Reynolds
General Manager Mental Health Services