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10th December, 2019

Mr. Michael McGrath, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 48953/19:

“To ask the Minister for Health his plans to establish dedicated free, drop in sexual and mental health clinics in Cork city; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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.

Primary Care

The **Youth Health Service** (YHS) is a HSE/Cork Kerry Community Healthcare health project. The YHS is a free non-judgemental sexual health and counselling service for young people aged 23 and under. The YHS offers information and advice and youth work support for young people and parents.

The Youth Health Service (YHS) provides the following supports to young people:

- Outreach STI clinic on a weekly basis
- Contraception clinic
- 3 option crisis pregnancy counselling and general Counselling support
- Access to a youth worker

The **Sexual Health Centre** is a Section 39 organisation which receives funding from Cork Kerry Community Healthcare through a Service Level Agreement.

The Sexual Health Centre in Cork provides the following services:

- One-to-one drop in support in relation to sexual health advice and information
- Free condom and lubricant provision
- Condom demonstrations to develop individual capacity for correctly using a condom
- Potential for drop in - Free Rapid HIV Testing for at risk groups as defined by the ECDC. These include the migrant community, sex workers, Men-who-have-sex-with-men and injecting drug users (appointment preferred due to staff availability)
- Potential for drop in - Free pregnancy testing (appointment preferred due to staff availability)

All of the above is supported by the Sexual Health Centre's helpline and online chat functions. In 2018, the Sexual Health Centre received 5,988 client enquiries, provided over 800 rapid HIV tests and distributed almost 22,000 condoms.

Mental Health

The GP is usually the first person to approach in relation to mental health concerns. GP's may either provide support directly or they can refer to community Mental Health Services.

Mental Health Services in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare aim to promote and protect the mental health of the population and to provide effective services to those who need them. Mental Health Services work collaboratively with other Health and Social Care Services. Our services have a strong focus on recovery and co-production and have consistently sought to develop and enhance community based services and reduce, where appropriate, those treated in more acute services.

Services for adults are provided through Adult Community mental Health Teams (CMHTs), Psychiatry of Later Life (POLL) Teams, Home Based Treatment Teams, Specialist Rehabilitation Team and Intellectual Disability Team. In addition, dedication liaison teams are based in Cork University Hospital and the Mercy University Hospital. These CMHTs and POLL teams are supported by day hospitals, day centres, acute units, residential centres and community residences / high support hostels.

Out of hours Mental Health Services are provided to those in crisis via the Emergency Departments in Cork city and county. For urgent medical attention, Emergency Services can be contacted by calling 999 or 112, or a person may present at the Emergency Department of their nearest Acute Hospital. The Emergency Departments for Cork city and county are as follows:

- Cork University Hospital, Wilton, Cork
- Mercy University Hospital, Grenville Place, Cork

For less critical medical attention during out of hours, a person may contact the GP out of hours service. The GP out of hours service for Cork city and county is SouthDoc 1850 335 999. In some instances, the GP or SouthDoc can arrange a direct admission to the local mental health unit if deemed appropriate clinically.

For confidential, non-judgemental support, the Samaritans are free to call, anytime day or night on 116 123. Pieta House offers a specialised treatment programme for people who have suicidal ideations or who participate in self harming behaviours. They may be contacted on 1800 247 247.

Mental Health Services, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare do not have any immediate plans to establish drop in mental health clinics in Cork city.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa O'Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare



Kevin Morrison
General Manager
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