

18th August 2020,
Deputy Mark Ward,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ Number: 17821/20

To ask the Minister for Health his plans to provide mental health training to persons involved locally and nationally in sporting organisations; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

Under the Connecting for Life strategy the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention provides a range of suicide prevention and post-vention training programmes (see www.nosp.ie/training) to support community gate keepers. Staff and volunteers from sporting organisations frequently take part in this training and indeed work with HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention on local community responses to suicide. The NOSP also has a national agreement with the GAA to provide SafeTALK training to clubs through the Healthy Clubs Initiative.

In addition, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has made commitments under Connecting for Life, including: the promotion of physical activity as a protective factor for mental health through the National Physical Activity Plan; ensuring policies, plans and programmes are designed to integrate suicide prevention programmes as actions within them; and to deliver suicide prevention training and wellbeing programmes such as Sport Ireland's "Find Your Fit" programme to National governing bodies of sport and Local Sports Partnerships.

Finally, Mental Health First Aid Ireland and the HSE have an agreement to deliver MHFA training to target voluntary, charity, public sector groups such as homeless services, youth organisations, emergency personnel and sporting organisations. This project saw the delivery of 2 MHFA training courses to staff and volunteers within Sport Ireland in 2019. In 2020, MHFA training will be delivered to sporting organisations through their membership of Sport Ireland, an additional 5 online courses to be delivered before the end of the year.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help given to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis until appropriate help is received or until the crisis resolves. The Standard and Youth Mental Health First Aid Ireland courses teach people how to provide MHFA. Participants will learn the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective. They learn a framework for communication, how to offer and provide initial help, and how to guide an adult or young person towards appropriate treatments and other supportive help.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sinead Reynolds
General Manager Mental Health Services