



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte  
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28<sup>th</sup> August 2020,  
Deputy Pat Buckley,  
Dail Eireann  
Dublin 2.

PQ Number: 20569/20

To ask the Minister for Health if he will report on the implementation of the model of care for specialist perinatal mental health services; and the number of additional staff in whole-time equivalent terms appointed to date in 2020.

Dear Deputy Buckley,

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.

Funding for the six Specialist Perinatal Mental Health hub teams was provided in 2016, 2017 and 2018 and 2019 to a total of €3.6m. This funding covers the cost of the full hub site teams, that is, in the three Dublin Maternity hospitals as well as Cork University Maternity Hospital, University Maternity Hospital Limerick and Galway University Hospital.

<b>Perinatal Funding - August 2020</b>				
	Funding €m	Posts Available WTE	Posts Filled WTE	Posts unfilled WTE
PFG 2017	1,000,000	8.4	5.7	2.7
PFG 2018	2,000,000	28	18	10
PFG 2019	600,000	7	-	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,600,000</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>
		100%	55%	45%



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In addition to the above funding and posts, the National Women & Infants Health Programme (NWIHP), with which this Model of Care is being jointly delivered, provided funding for the Mental Health Midwives in 2018. This is for each Hub Hospital which do not currently have one, and also for each Spoke Hospital. There are 4 additional mental health midwives to be funded for the three Dublin maternity hospitals and CUMH. NWIHP did not receive any funding for these posts in 2019 or 2020.

During 2019 the National Programme for the implementation of Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services focused on the recruitment of multidisciplinary teams in the 6 hub sites. Bespoke panels were created for positions such as Senior Psychologists, Senior Mental Health Social Workers and CNSMH nursing staff. The recruitment of mental health midwives in both the 6 hub and the 13 spoke sites in Ireland also continued with a number of national recruitment campaigns. Staff were provided with specific induction and training including training from Dr Liz McDonald, Honorary Consultant in Perinatal Psychiatry, Clinical Lead for Perinatal Workforce Development at the Royal College of Psychiatry in London.

The Specialist Perinatal Healthcare App for healthcare staff was developed in 2019 and is designed to provide the latest information to assist all frontline staff in their roles, providing information on how to access services for women seeking information, advice and support for mental health problems in pregnancy and the first year post-partum. The app has now been downloaded by approximately 1,000 frontline healthcare staff who work in areas such as midwifery, public health nursing, psychology, community mental health teams as well as GPs and practice nurses.

A project began in 2019 on developing a range of patient information leaflets for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services. These are now available to women and cover a wide range of topics including: perinatal mental health tips, mental health problems in pregnancy, health and supports available, information for women with existing mental health problems, postnatal depression information, Perinatal OCD, Lithium in pregnancy, Valproate in women and girls who could get pregnant, Postpartum Psychosis, as well as Information for carers. The link to the leaflets are additional information on the SPMHS app is available here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/specialist-perinatal-mental-health/>

Whilst the focus of the Model of Care (MOC) was on the specialist component of a perinatal mental health strategy, it is hoped and expected that this will act as the catalyst for all relevant service areas in the HSE to come together to implement a comprehensive mental health strategy. For this reason the MOC also included a section on the clinical pathway for a complete perinatal mental health response.

The MOC set out three components of specialist perinatal mental health services, these are:

- Specialist mental health service to maternity units/hospitals
- Mental health midwife component
- Specialist inpatient mother and baby unit



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Planning for Ireland's first Mother and Baby Unit is currently underway and a joint business case is being developed between Mental Health Services in HSE CHO6, St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin and the National Maternity Hospital. Given the documented adverse effects of separating mothers from their babies, the provision of a mother and baby unit as a national tertiary unit is considered vital and it is hoped that a submission to HSE National Estates Management will take place during 2020.

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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Jim Ryan  
Assistant National Director  
Head of Operations  
Mental Health