

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020,  
Deputy Mark Ward,  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

PQ 22030/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of homeless persons presenting at emergency departments with suicide attempts, self-harm injuries and or overdose by location in each of the years 2018, 2019 and to date 2020, in tabular form; 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.

The National Self-Harm Registry Ireland, operated by the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF), collects data related to self-harm presentations to all hospital emergency departments in the Republic of Ireland. Within the Registry individuals who are described in hospital notes as being of no fixed abode, or whose address is recognised as a homeless hostel or some other form of accommodation for the homeless, are recorded as being homeless.

As illustrated in **Table 1**, the total number of self-harm presentations to hospital emergency departments by persons experiencing homelessness in 2018 was 539. Based on provisional data, the number of self-harm presentations by persons experiencing homelessness was 550 in 2019. Approximately half of self-harm presentations in 2018 and 2019 (54%) involved an intentional drug overdose.

As a result of restrictions related to COVID-19, data collection for the Registry was suspended in most hospitals during the period 27 March – 29 June 2020.

To date, provisional data has been collected on self-harm presentations to eight hospital emergency departments to the end of April 2020. These hospitals provide nationally-representative findings given their spread across the country and that they account for 35-40% of all self-harm presentations to hospitals each year.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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In the first four months of 2020, there were 132 self-harm presentations made to these eight hospitals by persons experiencing homelessness compared to an average of 117 self-harm presentation made in the same four months of 2018/19, representing an increase of 11%. Similarly, presentations involving an intentional drug overdose were 23% higher in Jan-April of 2020, compared to the average number of presentations for the same period of 2018/19.

**Table 1: Number of self-harm presentations by persons experiencing homelessness in 2018, 2019 and to date in 2020 by presenting hospital**

| Hospital  | Self-harm |       |                  |                  | Intentional drug overdose |       |                  |                  |
|---|-----------|-------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------|------------------|------------------|
|   | 2018      | 2019* | Jan-Apr 2018/9** | Jan to Apr 2020* | 2018                      | 2019* | Jan-Apr 2018/9** | Jan to Apr 2020* |
| Adelaide & Meath & National Children's Hospital, Tallaght | 21        | 11    | 3                | 9                | 8                         | 5     | 1                | 6                |
| Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar                      | 6         | 0     |                  |                  | 2                         | 0     |                  |                  |
| Midland Regional Hospital, Portlaoise                     | 6         | 0     |                  |                  | 4                         | 0     |                  |                  |
| Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore                      | 1         | 8     |                  |                  | 1                         | 4     |                  |                  |
| Naas General Hospital                                     | 10        | 18    |                  |                  | 8                         | 11    |                  |                  |
| St James's Hospital                                       | 164       | 155   |                  |                  | 90                        | 92    |                  |                  |
| St Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire                      | 5         | 9     |                  |                  | 2                         | 5     |                  |                  |
| Other   | 28        | 21    |                  |                  | 20                        | 16    |                  |                  |
| Beaumont Hospital   | 18        | 17    |                  |                  | 13                        | 7     |                  |                  |
| James Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown                   | 42        | 20    |                  |                  | 36                        | 9     |                  |                  |
| Mater Misericordiae University Hospital                   | 57        | 107   | 49               | 78               | 29                        | 57    | 29               | 50               |
| Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda                    | 9         | 15    |                  |                  | 3                         | 10    |                  |                  |
| St Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny                      | 3         | 0     |                  |                  | 2                         | 0     |                  |                  |
| South Tipperary General Hospital                          | 2         | 1     | 0                | 2                | 1                         | 0     | 0                | 1                |
| Waterford Regional Hospital                               | 4         | 0     |                  |                  | 3                         | 0     |                  |                  |
| Cork University Hospital                                  | 12        | 20    | 8                | 4                | 6                         | 8     | 5                | 3                |
| Kerry General Hospital                                    | 4         | 4     | 1                | 3                | 1                         | 4     | 1                | 2                |
| Mercy University Hospital, Cork                           | 53        | 58    | 30               | 15               | 26                        | 32    | 16               | 8                |
| Mid-Western Regional Hospital, Limerick                   | 41        | 31    | 26               | 18               | 17                        | 15    | 10               | 10               |
| Letterkenny General                                       | 3         | 4     |                  |                  | 2                         | 1     |                  |                  |



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| Hospital                                      |            |            |            |            |            |            |           |           |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Mayo General Hospital                         | 1          | 3          |            |            | 0          | 1          |           |           |
| Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe             | 3          | 4          |            |            | 1          | 2          |           |           |
| University College Hospital, Galway           | 46         | 37         |            |            | 14         | 16         |           |           |
| Children's University Hospital, Temple Street | 0          | 1          |            |            | 0          | 0          |           |           |
| Cavan General Hospital                        | 0          | 1          |            |            | 0          | 1          |           |           |
| Our Lady's Hospital, Navan                    | 0          | 1          |            |            | 0          | 1          |           |           |
| Wexford General Hospital                      | 0          | 3          |            |            | 0          | 0          |           |           |
| Sligo General Hospital                        | 0          | 1          | 0          | 3          | 0          | 0          | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>539</b> | <b>550</b> | <b>117</b> | <b>132</b> | <b>289</b> | <b>297</b> | <b>62</b> | <b>80</b> |

\*Data for 2019 and 2020 is currently provisional and subject to revision.

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