



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte  
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16<sup>th</sup> October 2020,  
Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan ,  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ Number 26588/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health if he has considered developing an out-of-hours crisis service to give persons quick and easy access to mental health services in addition to investment in primary care mental health services and talk therapies for early prevention and intervention.**

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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 new mental health policy Sharing the Vision (2020) recognises the need for a whole-of population, whole-of-government approach to the delivery of mental health services. In adopting this approach, the policy is underpinned by an ecological model which uses a stepped care approach that ensures that the values from Sharing the Vision are preserved throughout. A 'stepped care' approach seeks to ensure that each person can access a range of options of varying intensity to match their needs. In other words, there can be a 'stepping up' or a 'stepping down' in accordance with the stage of recovery. A stepped approach to care should also help to increase efficiency by 'shifting' constituencies of need towards more of the 'upstream' services, that is, promotion, prevention, early intervention, recovery and participation. Over time, this should reduce the need for more expensive 'downstream' acute and crisis response services. In this context, strategic investment in 'upstream' services should be viewed as an investment rather than a cost.

**Universal Supports:**

Signposting to services; the YourMentalHealth Information Line, operates on a 24/7 basis. It provides information to the public about mental health supports and services that are provided by the HSE and funded partners nationally, locally, online and by phone/text. The team can advise how and when these services can be accessed. In addition, for those who may need immediate support, HSE Mental Health in collaboration with partners [SpunOut.ie](http://SpunOut.ie) launched the 24/7 text-based active listening service Text 50808. This is a free service which provides immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis.

**Primary care supports:**

**Adults**

The HSE Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC) service provides counselling for people experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties who present in the primary care setting. All adults in receipt of a medical



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card are eligible for the service. Access to this service is by referral from the client's GP or a member of the Primary Care Team.

CIPC is available in each CHO area and provides time-limited face-to-face counselling for adults experiencing. The CIPC model of service encompasses: provision in primary care settings; standardised referral and assessment; client opt-in; GP feedback; clinical outcome evaluation. CIPC counsellors utilise a range of counselling interventions depending on presenting issues and assessed needs. Depression and anxiety constitute the main reasons for referral.

Currently CIPC receives an average of 19,000 referrals per annum. In addition, plans are currently being drawn up to develop counselling provision for former residents of mother and baby homes. More recently CIPC has expanded in response to needs arising in light of the COVID-19 pandemic with local service developments including provision of bereavement counselling, and counselling to those impacted directly as a result of COVID-19.

### **Young people**

The HSE funds Jigsaw to provide youth mental health services for those with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. Jigsaw provide face-to-face, online and phone based services to young people aged between 12 to 25 years old while working with communities to resource and support parents and other adults who work with young people. Face-to-face services are delivered from 12 nationwide locations in the form of brief intervention sessions with healthcare professionals, usually taking place across 6 to 8 appointments. Other services include live 1 to 1 online chat, phone based support provided by a counsellor and text support. All Jigsaw services are highlighted on [www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie) Jigsaw's clinical services use the CORE (clinical outcomes in routine evaluation) measure to determine improvements in the mental health of clients. Based on CORE scores before and after brief intervention support the Jigsaw model has been demonstrated to be highly effective in improving outcomes for young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties.

### **Specialist Mental Health Services**

Specialist General Adult Mental Health Services provide multidisciplinary interventions for those presenting with moderate to severe mental health difficulties. These consultant led teams operate in the community where they receive referrals from primary care services. In terms of urgent referrals these teams have the ability to respond to urgent referrals with most teams having slots for urgent cases to be seen that day or the next working day. Outside normal working hours mental health services also have an urgent response capability provided through the on-call medical system which operates in all acute hospitals with a 24 hour ED. This on-call system consists of a consultant psychiatrist together with an NCHD. The consultants and NCHDs work within the Community Mental Health Teams or in the Hospital Liaison Services and provide the on-call service in addition to their day time commitment with Community Mental Health Teams.

Following investment from the Programme for Government Funding 2017, additional funding was obtained for the development of a model within all CHO areas for the provision of extended seven day mental health services within general adult services. This includes the recruitment of 48 posts.



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Finally, our hospital emergency departments and our inpatient units offer 24/7 services.

**Other relevant proposals in Sharing the Vision include:**

Out-of-hours crisis cafés are proposed as a new referral option, to support individuals to deal with an immediate crisis and to plan safely, drawing on their strengths, resilience and coping mechanisms to manage their mental health and wellbeing. Attendees would be able to access talk therapies, coping strategies and one-to-one peer support, provided by paid core staff assisted by a team of appropriately trained volunteers, working on a rota basis. The cafés may reduce demands on EDs by providing an environment more suited to the needs of some individuals who present. Moreover, appropriately and safely staffed crisis cafés can also be an alternative access point for children and adolescents. In addition tele-psychiatry models could be a way to provide 24-hour psychiatry consultations to service users of all ages, who can access supports from a variety of locations such as primary care centres, GP practices and VCS services.

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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Dr Sinead Reynolds  
General Manager Mental Health Services