



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht  
Cúram Sláinte Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú,  
An Mhí Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse  
Sláinte, Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar  
Ardáin, An Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh  
Fhailí.

☎: **057 9359787**

✉: [CHO8@hse.ie](mailto:CHO8@hse.ie)

Office of the Chief Officer,  
Midlands Louth Meath  
Community Health  
Organisation, Health  
Service Executive, Area  
Office, Arden Road,  
Tullamore, Co. Offaly

☎: **057 9359787**

✉: [CHO8@hse.ie](mailto:CHO8@hse.ie)

21st April, 2021

Ms Sorca Clarke T.D.,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re: Parliamentary Question - 19439/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of assist programmes that were delivered in each of the years 2018 to 2020 and to date in 2021 in counties Longford and Westmeath in tabular form. -Sorca Clarke**

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you recently submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and outline response as follows.

The below table sets out the number of ASIST programmes that were delivered across counties Longford and Westmeath in the time period 2018-2021. It also quantifies the total number of people who participated in the ASIST programme in each year.

Year	Number Delivered	Total Participants
2018	7	159
2019	8	143
2020 *	1	18
2021*	0	0

\*Due to the Covid 19 restrictions, from March 2020 delivery of all face to face suicide prevention programmes including SafeTALK and ASIST were paused and have not, as yet, resumed pending the easing of current level 5 restrictions and progress on the Government roll-out of Covid vaccine to facilitate face to face programmes.

On a more general note, please find below an update on the current services offered by the HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention in MLM CHO and on other supports that are available both locally and nationally. As these have been developed to provide support to people when they need it most it would be appreciated if this could be circulated widely.

**HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention: Awareness and Training Programmes:**

Due to the current restrictions, delivery of our face to face programmes (safeTALK, ASIST and Understanding Self-Harm) are now paused. In the interim, an online suicide prevention programme – **LivingWorks Start** – is available. The programme is targeted at anyone over the age of 18 who wants to

help prevent suicide and develop the skills to assist someone who may be at risk of suicide. It can be completed in 1½ hours and includes a four-step model and impactful simulations which are undertaken and put into practice during the programme. Since commencing in 2020, a total of 183 people from counties Longford and Westmeath have participated in the Start programme. A licence is required to undertake the programme. This can be obtained from Eddie Ward, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, Longford/Westmeath by emailing: [eddie.ward@hse.ie](mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie)

An **'Introduction to Self-Harm'** programme is also now available in an online format. This programme is suitable for those who seek to develop their knowledge and understanding of self-harm and the reasons underlying such behaviour, how to support and care for those engaging in self harm and gain knowledge regarding the resources and services that are available. Scheduled dates are outlined on the suicide prevention training website: <https://bookwhen.com/suicidepreventiontrainingmidlands>

The programme can also be delivered within settings to groups of 15 people over the age of 18. For more information please contact Eddie Ward, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, Longford/Westmeath by emailing: [eddie.ward@hse.ie](mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie)

An online version of the **'Workshop for Professionals and key contact people providing support to those bereaved through suicide'** is now available. The programme explores the unique needs of suicide bereavement so that participants become more equipped to provide support in the safest and most effective way possible. The programme is a blended workshop consisting of an online e-learning module and a 4-hour virtual online workshop. The workshop covers five key topics: a) understanding the grieving process, b) the context of suicide, c) how to support people bereaved through suicide, d) skills building, e) self-care. The programme is available to groups of 12 people from various centres/settings. For more information please contact Eddie Ward, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, Longford/Westmeath by emailing: [eddie.ward@hse.ie](mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie)

#### **Local and National Supports and Services:**

Information on Covid-19 and managing your wellbeing at this time is available on:

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/mental-health-supports-and-services-during-coronavirus/mental-health-supports-and-services-during-coronavirus.html>

- A free 24/7 text service, providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis is now available. Simply text HELLO to 50808
- [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie) provides information and signposting on all mental health support and services that are available nationally provided by the HSE and its funded partners. There is also a Freephone YourMentalHealth information line – 1800 111 888.
- Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service - For those who may be grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide, the HSE funded Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service (in conjunction with Pieta House) is available to provide practical help and support. Please contact Bernie Carroll Tel: 086 418 0088; Email: [bernie@pieta.ie](mailto:bernie@pieta.ie)
- Other bereavement supports: The National Bereavement Support Line provided by the Irish Hospice Foundation Helpline: 1800 807 077; [www.bereaved.ie](http://www.bereaved.ie) [www.childhoodbereavement.ie](http://www.childhoodbereavement.ie)
- HSE Psychology Service is offering a virtual drop in clinic and psychosocial service providing emotional support and advice in these challenging times. The service can be availed by email: [mlmpsychosocial@hse.ie](mailto:mlmpsychosocial@hse.ie)
- Online counselling services (free and low-cost) are available from [www.mymind.org/](http://www.mymind.org/) / [www.turn2me.org/](http://www.turn2me.org/) / [www.suicideorsurvive.ie](http://www.suicideorsurvive.ie)

#### **HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention: Information/Signposting Posters:**

The following resources are available (via email or hard copy) upon request. Please contact Eddie Ward, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, Longford/Westmeath by emailing: [eddie.ward@hse.ie](mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie)

- 'Personal and Community Information and Support Directories' on a bi-county basis.
- 'Help is at Hand for your emotional well-being and mental health during Covid-19'
- 'Help & Support Information Cards' - County focussed in a wallet size format
- 'Numbers if you need them' – information postcard on national supports.

## **HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention: Leaflets and other resources:**

A selection of information and support leaflets as outlined below are also available on request. Please contact Eddie Ward, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, Longford/Westmeath by emailing:

[eddie.ward@hse.ie](mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie)

- 'Responding to a person in suicidal distress – Guidance Document for public facing staff or volunteers'. This document aims to support staff and volunteers working in public facing roles to interact with people who present or contact the service in distress or at risk of suicide and self-harm.
- 'Would you know what to do if someone told you they were thinking of suicide?'
- 'If you have been bereaved by suicide'
- 'Supporting someone bereaved by suicide'
- 'Self harm and young people – and informational booklet for parents and concerned adults'

## **National Office for Suicide Prevention Quarterly Connecting for Life Newsletters:**

From a national perspective, the National Office for Suicide Prevention produce a quarterly Connecting for Life newsletters (links below). These provide an update on activities relevant to *Connecting for Life – Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020*.

<https://us14.campaign-archive.com/?u=8e0f880c3af74ee9e2f972b55&id=ddcbef64c3>

<https://us14.campaign-archive.com/?u=8e0f880c3af74ee9e2f972b55&id=52b11261a0>

## **Further Information:**

For further information on suicide prevention please contact

Eddie Ward

HSE Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention for Longford/Westmeath and Louth/Meath

The Health Centre, Dublin Road, Longford N39KR23. Tel: (086) 380-1152 E-mail: [eddie.ward@hse.ie](mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie)

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



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Des O'Flynn

Chief Officer

Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation