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Deputy Thomas Gould,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 5214/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the services funded to support those with alcohol-related brain injury.

-Thomas Gould

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

Alcohol-Related Brain Injury is a term used to describe the long term damage caused to the brain as a result of excessive alcohol use. The condition can affect people in a variety of ways and includes changes in the ability to remember, learn and problem solve. These changes can range from mild to severe and can compromise a person's ability to cope with normal everyday activities.

Alcohol can have a devastating effect on the brain and body however, most of the behavioural and emotional changes associated with alcohol use are due to the way alcohol effects the brain.

Alcohol-Related Brain Injury is a complex condition and may be present with a number of other conditions such as depression and anxiety and a person presenting at the acute end of the acquired brain injury spectrum will require a different range of care, supports and treatment from a person presenting at an earlier stage of the condition.

Health Services are provided based on the assessed needs of the individual rather than by diagnosis. It is this clinical assessment that determines the appropriate pathway for services, including Primary Care, Disability Services, Older Persons Services and Mental health Services as appropriate to their care needs. This applies to all people who present to Health Services, including individuals with alcohol related brain injuries.

Initially people may access services, mainly in primary care or through acute services and then mental health services if their assessed needs indicate this.

Services provided to enable the affected individual to live as independently as possible will vary according to assessment of the individual's on-going needs and local service provision. They may require ongoing support from a multidisciplinary team which may consist of psychiatry, psychology, occupational therapy, dieticians, social work, medical practitioners and family again depending on the needs of the individual.

Services and Supports

The Health Service Executive Health provides or funds a range of services across the country, for people with Brain Injury. These services include:

- Acute Hospital Services
- Mental Health Services
- The National Rehabilitation Hospital.
- A range of multi-disciplinary services at local level providing rehabilitation in the community to people with ABI
- A range of long term assisted living supports, usually contracted by the health service from the non-statutory sector.
- Rehabilitative training services, also usually contracted by the health service from the non-statutory sector.

These services are provided directly by the health service and a number of non statutory organisations across Disability Services, General Community Services, Acute Hospital Services and Services for Older People.

There are many organisations funded by the HSE which provide services to people effected by alcohol including people and their families effected by alcohol related brain injury. These organisations and services are mainly funded through Primary Care, Mental Health, Health and Wellbeing and Social Inclusion.

With regard to disability services, the majority of disability service provision in Ireland has historically and continues to be provided by voluntary agencies including Acquired Brain Injury Ireland which provides services to people with acquired brain injury. These agencies are funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act 2004.

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABII)

ABII is a Section 39 voluntary organisation which was set up in June 2000 in response to the need for services for people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). ABII aims to enable people with ABI to live an independent life in the community, by providing and maintaining a supportive living environment.

ABII works in partnership with the HSE to provide a range of flexible and tailor made services for people with acquired brain injury, in direct response to local identified needs. Services provided by ABII nationwide include:

- Fourteen Assisted Living Services;
- Home & Community Rehabilitation / Outreach Services;
- Day Resource Services;
- Family Support Services / Home Liaison / Social Work;
- Psychological Services; and
- Acquired Brain Injury Awareness Information, Training and Education Programmes.

Within Disability Services, the following organisations are also funded to provide services for individuals with disabilities as a result of an acquired brain injury. These include but are not limited to;

- Headway Ireland (HI):
- The Cheshire Foundation Ireland:
- Irish Wheelchair Association:
- Enable Ireland:

Neuro Rehabilitation Implementation Framework

The Neurorehabilitation Strategy would support access to services based on clinically assessed need rather than diagnosis. Assessment of need would include an assessment of ability to participate in an active rehabilitation programme. In some instances, an active addiction could impact on an individual's ability to participate in a rehabilitation programme and this would be taken into account.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvonne O'Neill', written over a horizontal line.

Yvonne O'Neill,
Interim National Director,
Community Operations