



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte  
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.

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**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

**Deputy David Cullinane,  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.**

**PQ Number: 8666/21**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the supports and multidisciplinary gender-identity service the HSE has in place for persons needing assessment for gender-identity related issues; his plans to put in place the necessary services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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.

In line with international trends, the demand for transgender services in Ireland has increased exponentially over the last number of years. Prevalence studies suggest an increase in those experiencing gender dysphoria, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) reporting a prevalence of 1:60,000 in 1997 and the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual version 5 (DSM5) reporting a prevalence of 1:20,000 in 2013.

Services for transgender care in Ireland have evolved organically over the last number of years, with adult services based in St. Columcille's Hospital (SCH), Loughlinstown (part of Ireland East Hospital Group - IEHG) and children's services are located in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children (OLHSC), part of Children's Health Ireland (CHI), in Crumlin. Endocrinology and Psychological support services are delivered on both sites.

In Crumlin, the Psychological services were provided by the Tavistock Clinic (a London-based Clinic with expertise in this area), which is funded by the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) up to December 2020. In SCH, the Psychological services are led by a Liaison Psychiatry Team, which falls under the governance of St. John of God Community Services, Mental Health Division at the Cluain Mhuire Service (SJOG-MHS). This is funded via a service level agreement (SLA) with CHO 6.

The National Gender Service (NGS) is an adult service that provide multidisciplinary gender care. This involves both assessment for gender-identity related issues, as well as multidisciplinary support and medical interventions. In the last five years the referral rates to the service have increased significantly resulting in large increases in waiting times. The NGS has submitted business cases for additional staff to address this deficit in capacity. These business cases are being reviewed as part of this years estimates process, with approval already provided for a number of posts to being addressing the waiting list and allow the NGS to offer a more diverse range of supports and interventions (including Occupational Therapy, for example).



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Following the recent High Court ruling in England on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 regarding the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) in Tavistock and Portman (NHS Foundation Trust), a decision has been made by Tavistock and Portman service to suspend new referrals for under 16's pending the outcome and determination of any appeal. This impacts on patients who have historically had access to the Tavistock and Portman service through the HSE Treatment Abroad Scheme.

Currently the HSE are working on the establishment of a child and adolescent service in Ireland with a CAMHS Consultant post recently approved with the recruitment process underway. CHI at Crumlin have advertised for a replacement Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist who will be part of the Team and interviews are occurring in early March 2021.

It is important that the care pathway applied to children and adolescents is compatible with the adult service to which they are likely to transition, in order to provide a comprehensive, sensitive and safe service for these young people.

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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Thomas O'Brien  
General Manager Mental Health Services