



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

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Head of Operations, Mental Health Service  
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19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Deputy Mark Ward  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

PQ Number: 12196/21

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if mental health supports such as counselling and psychotherapy are provided specifically to persons with newly diagnosed vision impairment and sight loss; and the funding breakdown for these services. -Mark Ward**

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 HSE NCS does not offer a dedicated service to persons with newly diagnosed vision impairment or sight loss, however the HSE NCS does provide a range of counselling services to adults which may be relevant to this client group. See details below.

#### **HSE National Counselling Service**

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS), established in 2000 provides counselling and psychotherapy to a wide range of clients. The NCS is available free of charge across the country to residents in the Republic of Ireland. The aim of the NCS is to support clients to improve their quality of life and reduce their psychological distress through the provision of evidence-based, professional, client centred counselling. The NCS employs qualified, accredited and experienced Counsellor/Therapists. Face to face counselling, counselling by phone and online video are available,

#### **Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC)**

CIPC provides time limited counselling to adult GMS cardholders with mild to moderate psychological difficulties from over 240 locations, including primary care centres, nationwide. This service is available to adults over 18 years who are medical card holders and experiencing mild to moderate psychological and emotional difficulties such as: depression, anxiety, panic reactions, relationship problems, loss issues, stress, adjustment to chronic illness, health conditions, disability such as vision impairment or sight loss.

Referral to CIPC is through a person's GP or member of their local primary care team only.

Adults with newly diagnosed vision impairment and sight loss are welcome to access NCS services as outlined.



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HSE Disability Services fund **National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)**, under Section 39 of the Health Act to provide a range of centre, domiciliary and community based services to people who are blind or vision impaired. This funding is governed by a number of Service Arrangements in all 9 CHO Areas, which identify service delivery provided by the agency in return for the money being provided to them. The Service Arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis

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

### NCS contact details

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Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow, South Tipperary



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