

25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Deputy Mark Ward  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

PQ 12939/21

To ask the Minister for Health his views on a report by a group (details supplied) in relation to recovery from eating disorders Ireland that states that lack of proper treatment for persons with eating disorders is leaving sufferers misunderstood, abandoned, isolated and lost; and if a comprehensive eating disorder service will be delivered. -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.

Most people can and do get better from eating disorders. While a small number of people benefit from more intensive treatment through day programmes or inpatient care, the most effective treatment setting is in the community. Dedicated community based eating disorder services, where multidisciplinary teams have specialist training can provide evidence based care and treatment.

The HSE developed and approved a Model of Care for Eating disorders that provides a blueprint for the development of specialist regional teams with skilled clinicians that can provide evidence based interventions collaborating with acute hospital physicians and GPs as required. Early intervention and evidence based treatment by multi-disciplinary specialist community eating disorder teams are recommended by the HSE Model of Care for Eating Disorders with a focus on both psychological and physical recovery. The Model of Care was launched in 2018 and continued implementation is vital to deliver access to high quality eating disorders in Ireland.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/eating-disorders/moc/hse-eating-disorder-services-model-of-care.pdf>

The clinical program aims to establish an Eating Disorder network (8 adult teams and 8 CAMHS teams) in accordance with agreed Model of Care 2018 and approved implementation plan over the coming years. To date 3 teams has commenced recruitment and are delivering a service (CHO4 CAMHS, CHO 7 CAMHS and CHO6 adults).

The HSE is provided funding on a yearly basis as per the estimates process. Funding is available in 2021 to progress the recruitment of clinicians to ED teams. An implementation plan has been approved to allow for phased recruitment and training however, the availability of skilled staff is a significant issue in mental health



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services where demand outstrips supply in both the national and international contexts. The HSE is working closely with NDTP, National Doctors Training and Planning, to take measures to ensure trained clinicians in Eating Disorders are available to take up posts.

Since 2016 €5.7 million has been made available for Eating Disorder posts through programme for government funding. Of that €1.77 million has been invested to date in Eating Disorder Specialist Posts. In 2021 the balance of €3.94 million is available to be invested in specialist Eating Disorder services. It is the intention of the HSE to progress the recruitment of these eating disorder specialist posts in 2021.

If an individual is concerned about themselves or someone known to them, they should be directed to their GP in the first instance for primary care screening assessment and examination. Their GP may then make recommendations which may include, if clinically indicated, referral to the secondary care mental health services for full eating disorder assessment.

#### **Eating Disorder Supports:**

**Bodywhys:** The HSE provides funding annually to Bodywhys to run the helpline which is delivered by a team of trained volunteers. They also provide a range of services (support groups, online groups, email and family programmes) for adults and young people with eating disorders, and their families. The HSE also supports Bodywhys to run the **PiLaR (Peer Led Resilience) Programme**, a 4-week online modular based programme for parents, friends and carers of a person with an eating disorder to build resilience and gain support in their role as a carer.

Helpline [01 2107906](tel:012107906) Monday, Wednesday and Sunday from 7.30pm to 9.30pm and Saturday from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

Contact [alex@bodywhys.ie](mailto:alex@bodywhys.ie) for support.

Visit [bodywhys.ie](http://bodywhys.ie)

#### **HSE Eating Disorder Self Help App**

In March 2019 the HSE has launched the first Self Care App which provides valuable information for those with or people caring for someone with an eating disorder.

A self-care app for people:

- with an eating disorder
- caring for someone with an eating disorder
- worried about developing an eating disorder
- diagnosed or are recovering from an eating disorder

From the HSE National Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders and Bodywhys.

[Read more about the HSE Eating Disorder Self Help App.](#)

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.



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Yours sincerely,

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