



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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

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April 9th 2021,
Deputy Neale Richmond,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ
Number: 13914/21

PQ
Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of treatment spaces nationwide for treating eating disorders; his views on whether this is an appropriate amount; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Neale Richmond

Dear Deputy Richmond,

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 HSE Model of care recommends that community eating disorder teams be established to meet expected need within each catchment area. At present there are three existing teams and plans to complete these 3 existing community teams in 2021 along with funding available to start recruitment for 3 further teams

The HSE is provided with 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 services where demand outstrips supply in both the national and international contexts. The HSE is working



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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.

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

Yours sincerely,

Thomas O'Brien
General Manager Mental Health Services