



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

T 01 6207304 R: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

Head of Operations, Mental Health Service  
St Loman's Hospital, Palmerstown Dublin 20  
Tel: 01-6207304 Email: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
**Deputy Peadar Tóibín,**  
**Dail Eireann,**  
**Dublin 2.**

**17012/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health if his Department has undertaken a study to investigate the impact of Covid -19 and lockdowns on the provision of mental health services. -Peadar Tóibín**

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

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.

A number of research studies and reports have been initiated by and received input from Mental Health National Clinical Programmes and the HSE National Clinical Advisor & Group Lead for Mental Health. These include: the report on “Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19 in Ireland and the Need for a Secondary Care (Mental Health Service) Response”, prepared on behalf of the Office of the National Clinical Advisor and Group Lead in Mental Health; the report on the “Impact of COVID-19 on HSE Mental Health Services”, prepared on behalf of the HSE by Professor Brendan Kelly (Consultant Psychiatrist) Trinity College Dublin; and the study on “The impact of the COVID -19 pandemic and the societal restrictions on health and wellbeing and on service capacity and delivery: a plan for health care and population health recovery”, prepared by Dr Philip Crowley and Angela Hughes and based on analysis by key HSE clinical programmes.

The latter study is most relevant as it examined the early evidence of the long-term effects of COVID-19 on individuals, which found that while COVID-19 can result in prolonged illness and persistent symptoms, even in young adults and persons with no underlying medical conditions who were not hospitalised (Carfi et al., 2020 and WHO, 2020), evidence continues to emerge and the true nature of long term physical and mental effects of COVID-19 infection on some individuals is still being studied.

To complement the studies undertaken to date and inform the need for further research, Mental Health Operations conducted analysis of the data returns received from specialist mental health services (including Community Mental Health Teams and Acute Inpatient Units) which demonstrates that Mental Health Services proactively responded to service delivery during the pandemic and the various lockdowns. The data returns also show that mental health services to date have not received a tsunami of referrals across services after the easing of restrictions, as had been suggested through anecdotal evidence.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. O'Brien'.

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Thomas O'Brien  
General Manager Mental Health Services