



Denis Naughten TD
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

denis.naughten@oireachtas.ie

3rd May 2022

PQ Ref 19997/22

To ask the Minister for Health if he will extend the community healthcare west initiative of a youth advisory panel to each CHO nationwide to explore the risk and protective factors for youth mental health and suicidality of teenagers; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

The HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) has been requested to respond to your question above.

The development of a Youth Advisory Panel referred to in your question, is to ensure that youth's opinions are consulted at each stage of a new project exploring youth mental health and suicide ideation, entitled **Informing Youth Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion through Secondary Analysis of the Planet Youth Datasets (Inform - YSP)**. A national call-out for applicants to join this Youth Advisory Panel closed on 29th April.

This project aims to explore the risk and protective factors for youth mental health and suicidality, by examining **Planet Youth** survey responses provided by thousands of teenagers in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. It is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and is led by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre and School of Psychology at NUI Galway, in collaboration with Planet Youth, the HSE NOSP, HSE West and the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF).

- For more information, visit <https://www.nuigalway.ie/cfrc/projects/currentprojects/inform-ysp/>

Background information

The Planet Youth survey was designed by the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) at Reykjavik University. It examines many aspects of the lives of 16 year-olds and provides information on the risk and preventive factors that predict adolescent substance use, and leads to local/regional national interventions. Planet Youth focuses on the determinants of adolescent health, including relationships with friends and family, social activities, participation in sports and other extracurricular activities, bullying, future expectations, tobacco, alcohol and other substance use, sleep and stress.

This survey has been conducted in Iceland since 1992. The Iceland team now collaborates with 35 regions around the world, including Ireland, where it was established in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon in partnership with the Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

Planet Youth conducted surveys among 15-16 year olds in all secondary schools in the West of Ireland in 2018 and 2020 (with another planned for 2022), gathering detailed information about mental well-being, suicidal ideation, lifestyles, behaviour and experiences from approximately 5,000 teenagers in each survey.

The secondary analysis will:

- Investigate trends in adolescent mental well-being & suicidal ideation (e.g. thoughts/behaviours) from 2018-2022, and examine differences in the mental well-being and suicidal ideation reported by adolescents in Ireland before (2018), and throughout/after the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 & 2022).
- Identify the most significant risk and protective factors associated with adolescent mental well-being and suicidal ideation in Ireland.
- Explore the association between mental well-being/suicidal ideation and exposure to multiple/cumulative risk, and identify the protective factors, which buffer or moderate this relationship, across the 2018, 2020 and 2022 cohorts.
- Establish a comprehensive profile of the adolescents who are most at risk of experiencing poor mental well-being and/or suicidal ideation in Ireland.
- Analyse data from the 2018, 2020, and 2022 Planet Youth datasets to identify trends in the mental well-being and suicidal ideation of adolescents from different social backgrounds (e.g. gender; socio-economic status), and explore the relationship between risk and protective factors across these target groups.

Future plans

It is not the right time in this project for the HSE NOSP to advise on the feasibility of a nationwide extension of this longitudinal study. Nevertheless, the Office looks forward to working with collaborative partners on this project and to the delivery and dissemination of findings from the secondary analysis of the datasets, as described above.

As part of the current project, a comprehensive Knowledge Translation (KT) Plan will be devised to ensure that the evidence generated will reach relevant stakeholders and maximise impact on policy and practice. The HSE NOSP awaits this output in particular, as it will assist the Office with our strategic and research priorities, in alignment with the ongoing implementation of Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide.

I trust this information is useful for you. Please do revert if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely,



Mr John Meehan

HSE Assistant National Director, Mental Health Planning
& Head of National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP)
johnf.meehan@hse.ie