



Baile Átha Cliath Theas, Cill Dara & Iarthar Chill Mhantáin
– Cúram Sláinte Pobail
Teach Darach, Páirc na Mílaoise, An Nás, Co. Chill Dara, W91 KDC2

Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow Community Healthcare
Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 KDC2
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10th March 2022

Deputy Bernard J Durkan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: PQ 9847/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the steps being taken or in hand to deal with any backlog of concerns pertaining to the protection of adults at risk of abuse in CHO7, Kildare, Wicklow and Dublin with particular reference to the need to protect those most vulnerable in our society; if CHO7 is adequately resourced with the number of social workers to ensure the proper safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse; the plans to increase the number of staff in the CHO7 area; and if he will make a statement on the matter”

Bernard J. Durkan

Dear Deputy Durkan,

I refer to the above parliamentary question that you submitted to the Minister for Health. The Minister has requested that the HSE respond directly to you on this matter. I have examined the question raised and the following outlines the position.

HSE Adult Safeguarding teams respond to concerns of abuse of vulnerable adults in older persons and disability services in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy 2014.

Currently there are two ways to access the safeguarding and protection team in CHO7:

1. Through a community referral relating to concerns about a person who may or may not be known to services. All such communications are received by the duty social work safeguarding team and community referrals are prioritised as these carry the greatest risk. There is no waitlist for community cases in this CHO.
2. Through preliminary screenings and safeguarding plans which are submitted by staff in older persons/ disability services usually relating to people in residential units for disability or older persons. Unfortunately, a backlog has developed in recent years relating to the oversight and quality assurance of preliminary screenings and safeguarding plans which



are sent by services to the safeguarding team. It is important to note that the delay is not with the undertaking of safeguarding screenings and safeguarding plans for the adult at risk because these are completed in the services. The delay relates to the quality assurance process that is completed by the safeguarding team. In January 2022, the safeguarding team cleared a legacy backlog relating to preliminary screenings. The backlog relating to quality assurance of legacy safeguarding plans has not yet been completed.

Demand: Safeguarding concerns received

An analysis of data provided in the 2020 NSO annual report (see table below) shows that high numbers of safeguarding concerns have been notified in CHO7 over the past 5 years with this CHO making up between 13% and 22% of national referrals over the past 5 years. In 2018, this CHO received 22% of the national safeguarding notifications.

Table 1: Profile of safeguarding concerns by year and by CHO 2016 - 2020

| CHO | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Grand Total |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| CHO1 | 711 | 768 | 878 | 879 | 828 | 4064 |
| CHO2 | 687 | 704 | 755 | 649 | 646 | 3441 |
| CHO3 | 635 | 927 | 1110 | 886 | 697 | 4255 |
| CHO4 | 1060 | 1189 | 1628 | 1730 | 1342 | 6949 |
| CHO5 | 1310 | 1567 | 1476 | 1493 | 1398 | 7244 |
| CHO6 | 478 | 850 | 916 | 1001 | 955 | 4200 |
| CHO7 | 1018 | 1772 | 2575 | 1976 | 1402 | 8743 |
| CHO8 | 1158 | 1454 | 1507 | 1338 | 1547 | 7004 |
| CHO9 | 976 | 1049 | 935 | 1263 | 1401 | 5624 |
| Total | 8033 | 10280 | 11780 | 11215 | 10216 | 51524 |

CHO7 has the largest population of all of the CHOs. An analysis of the available data (see table below) shows that in 2020, CHO7 was in keeping with other parts of the country in terms of the reporting rate of safeguarding concerns (2.6). In 2020, CHO7 received 14% of concerns nationally which is in line with the adult population in CHO7 which accounts for 15% of the adult population across the CHOs.



Table 4: Reporting rate per 1,000 of adult population: all adults by CHO 2020

| CHO | Males 18 Years+ | | | Females 18 Years+ | | | Total 18 Years+ | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Pop. | Concern | Rate/ 1000 Pop. | Pop. | Concern | Rate/ 1000 Pop. | Pop. | Concern | Rate/ 1000 Pop. |
| 1 | 143,416 | 482 | 3.36 | 147,289 | 338 | 2.29 | 290,705 | 820 | 2.82 |
| 2 | 167,995 | 269 | 1.60 | 173,234 | 371 | 2.14 | 341,229 | 640 | 1.88 |
| 3 | 141,996 | 350 | 2.46 | 145,439 | 341 | 2.34 | 287,435 | 691 | 2.40 |
| 4 | 255,667 | 656 | 2.57 | 266,216 | 684 | 2.57 | 521,883 | 1,340 | 2.57 |
| 5 | 186,605 | 649 | 3.48 | 193,439 | 731 | 3.78 | 380,044 | 1,380 | 3.63 |
| 6 | 141,841 | 444 | 3.13 | 155,848 | 510 | 3.27 | 297,689 | 954 | 3.20 |
| 7 | 259,417 | 610 | 2.35 | 274,204 | 778 | 2.84 | 533,621 | 1,388 | 2.60 |
| 8 | 218,781 | 723 | 3.30 | 225,075 | 819 | 3.64 | 443,856 | 1,542 | 3.47 |
| 9 | 229,925 | 625 | 2.72 | 244,976 | 773 | 3.16 | 474,901 | 1,398 | 2.94 |
| Total | 1,745,643 | 4,808 | 2.75 | 1,825,720 | 5,345 | 2.93 | 3,571,363 | 10,153 | 2.84 |

Capacity: Available staffing

The CHO7 Safeguarding team are currently funded for 10 social work posts (1 Principal SW, 6 SW Team Leaders and 3 Professionally Qualified SW). This CHO has proportionally less funded posts when compared with other CHOs taking population into account.

I understand that there are plans to increase safeguarding staff in this CHO in line with the NSP 2022 which includes an equal distribution of additional staff for each of the nine CHOs.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, should you require further details please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sinead Reynolds
Head of Service QSSI