



Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte  
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Deputy O'Rourke,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

11<sup>th</sup> August 2022

**PQ Number: 40755/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons treated under the HSE National Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders in 2021 and to-date in 2022; and the number of persons currently on a waiting list to access the programme. -Darren O'Rourke**

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Dear Deputy O'Rourke,

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.

In January 2018, the HSE published a National Model of Care for Eating Disorders (MOC) in partnership with College of Psychiatrists' of Ireland and Bodywhys. In the absence of a pre-existing dedicated eating disorder infrastructure or strategy, this Model of Care document has been developed in order to guide the provision of high quality, accessible and value for money eating disorder services in Ireland. Key recommendations include the development of a national network of dedicated eating disorder teams embedded within the mental health service, a stepped model of outpatient, day patient and inpatient care provision based on clinical need, and the development of a skilled, trained workforce. In the context of the significant physical morbidity associated with eating disorders, this Model of Care also recommends a strong integration between primary care, mental health services and medical teams, including the bridging of the acute hospital and mental health service divide through mutual clinical commitments and shared pathways.

The NCPEP aims to establish an ED network (8 adult teams and 8 CAMHS teams) in accordance with the agreed Model of Care 2018. These multidisciplinary teams provide specialist eating disorder assessment and treatment in the community and are the foundations of delivering quality eating disorder care across the stepped model of care.

Each of the operational 3 eating disorder teams collects clinical and activity data, this data is collated and each year a summary of the data is published on our webpage. A comprehensive database system is not yet available and the data is gathered and verified manually. Additional teams are in recruitment and a number of dedicated clinicians are located in some services across the HSE. We are updating our data collection system to capture all of this work from Q4 2022.



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Below is the information requested based on the data submitted from 3 Eating Disorders Teams

Number	2021 (Full year data)	2022 (Q1)
No. of referrals	504	114
No. assessments completed	301	52

Number	On August 1st 2022
No. of adults on waiting list	50
No. of children and adolescents on waiting list	58

The 2021 data evidenced there was a 120% increase from 2020 in referrals received by the 3 teams and a 100% increase in those accessing an assessment. Almost twice as many more again accessed treatment. The significant rise in eating disorders was seen mostly in girls and women who represented 94% of those assessed to have an eating disorder. Diagnoses of Anorexia Nervosa rose by 172%. Recovery rates were maintained by the 3 teams.

The current waitlist reflects the unprecedented rise in severity and numbers of eating disorder presentations due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. This is a similar experience internationally and not unique to Ireland. The demand for eating disorder services since mid-2020 has surpassed the expected demand. Resource recommendations for eating disorder teams are based on expected referrals of 60-70 per year per catchment area of 500,000. Referrals are above twice this rate per team. All teams provide active wait list support which includes signposting to BodyWhys support services and advice to referrers. 2 of the operational eating disorder teams are due to move to new clinical premises which will increase capacity to provide additional treatments. Reducing the number on waiting lists is a key priority for all eating disorder teams.

Data from 2022 is regularly returned to the NCPED and will be verified and collated at the end of 2022. To date (Q1 2022) there are early indications that referrals to community eating disorder services have plateaued and remain well above predicted demand prior to the pandemic.

A more detailed breakdown of our data for 2020 and 2021 can be accessed at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/eating-disorders/resources/>

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



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