



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte,
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin,
Baile Phámar, Baile Átha Cliath 20.
R: PQReps.NatMHOPS@hse.ie

Head of Operations,
Mental Health Service, St Loman's Hospital,
Palmerstown, Dublin 20.
Email: PQReps.NatMHOPS@hse.ie

Deputy David Cullinane.
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

01st July 2022

PQ Number: 29857/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full-year cost of an additional adult eating disorder team; and the number of adult eating disorder teams in operation - David Cullinane

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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.

Eating disorders have the highest mortality and morbidity within mental health and they pose significant health, social and economic cost to people with eating disorders, to their families and to society. Early intervention, evidence based care, and consistent support make a profound difference to the clinical and personal recovery of people who are affected by eating disorders, including to those in adolescence when so many eating disorders begin.

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.

Most people can and do recover from eating disorders if they receive effective, evidence based treatment from ED trained staff. 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. The MOC has a core focus on developing regional community based specialist eating disorder services provided by skilled multidisciplinary teams.

The NCPED aims to establish an ED network (8 adult teams and 8 CAMHS teams) in accordance with the agreed Model of Care 2018. There are currently 3 eating disorders (ED) specialist teams in operation, 2 CAMHS teams serving Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CHO4) and Community Healthcare Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow (CHO7) and an adult team in Community Healthcare East (CHO6). 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. CAMHS ED team staffing is recommended at WTE 14.4 per 500,000-600,000. Adult ED Team staffing is recommended at WTE 13.4 per 500,000-600,000.

Since 2016 over €8 million has been made available for Eating Disorder posts through programme for government funding. This has resulted in the set-up of the 3 existing Eating Disorder teams and to progress recruitment for the 2nd phase of teams in CHO4 (adult), CHO9 (adult) and CHO2 (CAMHS). This 2nd phase of teams are in advanced stages of recruitment and set up to establish a high quality service. The 2022 funding will be used for the continued investment in specialist Eating Disorder posts including a 3rd phase of specialist community team development in 2022 CHO5 Adult, CHO1 Adult and CHO6 CAMHS.

The NCPED recommends delivering 3 eating disorder teams per year to ensure sustainable phased recruitment and training. The HSE is provided funding on a yearly basis as per the estimates process for the National Service Plan. We plan to seek funding for 3 teams each year in 2023 and 2024 with the final team in 2025. We is estimated that each new team will cost €1.4 million for the staff, education and training funding will also be required and local CHO s will need to plan for capital costs to allow for suitable accommodation for each team in line with the schedule of accommodation in the model of care. Capital costs will vary by CHO depending on current accommodation and ability to rent/lease/buy new accommodation in their area.

An estimated 188,895 Irish people will experience an eating disorder at some point in their lives (based on epidemiological projections). Approximately, 1,757 new ED cases develop each year in Ireland in the 10-49 age group. Females are at least 2-3 times more likely than males to develop an eating disorder. Since the onset of the COVID pandemic there has been a significant rise in presentations of eating disorders across health care settings in Ireland. This is a similar pattern being reported internationally. Children, adolescents and adults are presenting more medically unwell with more severe clinical presentations than prior to the pandemic. Referral rates to existing community eating disorder teams have significantly surpassed predicted demand and capacity estimates made prior to the pandemic. The NCPED recently successfully secured funding to recruit medical and paediatric consultants within acute hospitals to work with existing and future community eating disorder teams.

Given this increase in demand a review of the Model of Care is planned during 2022/23. The outcomes of this review will influence the ED teams' requirements from 2024 onwards. Once completed we can draft an implementation plan.

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

Yours sincerely,



Dr Amir Niazi
National Clinical Advisor & Group Lead for Mental Health
Clinical Design and Innovation
Health Service Executive

Building a Better Health Service

CARE COMPASSION TRUST LEARNING