



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Mark Ward.  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

29th March 2022

**PQ Number: 12914/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the workforce plan for specialist eating disorder teams including recruitment and retention of staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mark Ward**

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

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). There are 3 additional teams in the advance stage of establishment in 2022 (CHO4 ADULT, CHO9 adult and CHO2 CAMHS). New funding has been provided for 3 teams in 2022. These multidisciplinary teams provide specialist eating disorder assessment and treatment in the

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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.

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. However, the availability of skilled staff is a significant issue in mental health services where demand outstrips supply in both the national and international contexts. The HSE is working closely with NDTP, National Doctors Training and Planning, to take measures to ensure trained clinicians in Eating Disorders are available to take up posts. Health and Social Care professionals have met with NCPED to identify strategies to attract professionals to work within ED teams especially dietitians. Within nursing there is a number of courses that nursing can access that focus on eating disorders and allow nurses to gain expertise in the area before joining a team. With the number of teams growing there is an opportunity for students to have clinical placements within teams and return to work in the area.

For all CHOs where funding has been allocated, The NCPED is continuing to work closely to support recruitment, set up clinical pathways and provide education and training to clinicians. All sites are committed to filling the posts and creating these community eating disorder teams. It is anticipated that by the end of 2022, the Eating Disorder Network of community teams will have significantly expanded.

There is a dynamic training and education plan from online induction modules, access to treatment specific training and supervision as well as ED network days. All new staff and teams join from the beginning. There is a growing expertise in eating disorders within the HSE.

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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