



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte,  
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin,  
Baile Phámar, Baile Átha Cliath 20.  
Tel: (01) 6207304 R: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

Head of Operations,  
Mental Health Service, St Loman's Hospital,  
Palmerstown, Dublin 20.  
Tel: (01) 6207304 Email: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

Deputy Holly Cairns  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

08<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**PQ Number: 17403/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on the waiting list for in-patient eating disorder treatment who are ineligible for HSE funding - Holly Cairns**

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Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

Adult community eating disorder teams will begin by providing outpatient care then progress to developing Intensive treatment programmes (day patient care) and ultimately provide specialist inpatient care. Although there is good evidence that inpatient psychiatric care is not required for most people with eating disorders, it is recognised that a small number of people, mainly with restrictive eating disorders will require access to inpatient care for structured refeeding and/or stabilisation. Inpatient psychiatric admission will be indicated when treatment in outpatient and day patient levels of care has been unsuccessful. It will be indicated for those who most need it and with a greater severity of illness (those at severely low weight, comorbidity that requires inpatient psychiatric treatment and those who require 24 hours structured refeeding and stabilisation). For safe integrated care the MOC recommends that adult inpatient psychiatric beds are co-located within acute hospitals. The inpatient psychiatric beds will be developed to provide nutritional rehabilitation through nasogastric feeding.



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Adults who have an eating disorder diagnosis and require inpatient care can be referred to any of the HSE's acute inpatient mental health-approved centres around the country. Adults presenting with an eating disorder can also be treated in an acute hospital if their physical health needs require this. Under National Mental Health Policy Documents and in line with MOC the number of adult eating beds will increase, including an additional 3 beds in St. Vincent's University Hospital, 5 beds in North Dublin, 5 beds in Galway and 5 beds in Cork. Timeframes for new beds will have to be identified. These beds will be linked to eating disorder hubs and provision will be in line with Sharing the Vision recommendations.

Children and adolescents with an eating disorder diagnosis who require inpatient treatment can be referred to one of the CAMHS inpatient approved centres. Referrals are reviewed individually to determine the likely clinical benefits of admission as well as possible other treatment alternatives. There are 4 CAMHS Units across the HSE; Linn Dara Approved Centre, Dublin, St Josephs Approved Centre in Dublin, Eist Linn Approved Centre in Cork and Merlin Park Approved Centre in Galway. Specialist eating disorder beds are available in Merlin Park Galway and Linn Dara. There are plans for an Eating Disorder Unit in the new National Children's Hospital which will provide 8 additional beds.

Until the Eating Disorder network is fully established in line with the Model of Care, the HSE will continue to work with the private sector in certain circumstances if and when this is required. Decisions are made by each CHO area and are based on the clinical need of the individual as assessed by the local mental health team.

In answer to the Deputy's question, the HSE does not keep waiting lists data on the number of persons on the waiting list for in-patient eating disorder treatment who are ineligible for HSE funding.

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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**Jim Ryan**  
**Assistant National Director - Head of Operations**  
**National Mental Health Services**