



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor.
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

31st May 2022

PQ Number: 25173/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full-year cost to ensure that ringfenced funding for eating disorder treatment remains in place - Jennifer Murnane O'Connor

Dear Deputy O'Connor,

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. The MOC is the blueprint for the HSE to roll out specialist eating disorder services in Ireland to address the current unmet need for specialist eating disorder service within HSE. Outpatient specialist care is considered to be the most effective treatment setting for most people with eating disorders. The MOC has a core focus on developing regional community based specialist eating disorder services provided by skilled multidisciplinary teams.

The clinical programme aims to establish an Eating Disorder network (eight adult teams and eight CAMHS teams) in accordance with the agreed Model of Care 2018. Currently, there are three teams in operation: two CAMHS teams (one serving Cork/Kerry Community Healthcare - CHO4 and the other serving Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare - CHO7) and an adult team in Community Healthcare East (CHO6). These multidisciplinary teams provide specialist eating disorder assessment and treatment in the community. The first team was established in April 2018 (CHO7 CAMHS), the adult team in CHO6 commenced expansion in November 2018 and CHO4 CAMHS ED team commenced in May 2019.

Since 2016 €7.9 million has been made available for Eating Disorder posts through programme for government funding. Of that, €3.3 million has been invested to date in Eating Disorder Specialist Posts. 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 balance of €4.8 million remains available for continued investment in specialist Eating Disorder posts including a 3rd phase of specialist community team development in 2022. In 2022 teams in CHO5 adult, CHO9 CAMHS and CHO6 CAMHS have commenced recruitment. 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 based on 70 referrals per year as described in MOC.

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 2020 data from the 3 teams showed a 60% rise in referrals, 43% increase in assessments completed and twice as many people started treatment when compared to 2019. The data in 2021 shows there was a further 120% increase in referrals received by the 3 teams and twice as many accessed an assessment. There was a 71% increase in those accessing 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.

An evaluation of the MOC is required to review the resources required in line with the demand. This will be commissioned in 2022. The outcome of this evaluation will give us more accurate staffing requirements in line with demand.

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 team will cost 1.4M 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.

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
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