



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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

26th May 2022

PQ Number: 25174/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full-year cost to ensure universal access to mental health supports such as psychotherapy for women dealing with an eating disorder. -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. 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 as outlined in MOC <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/eating-disorders/resources/> 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 9 teams funded with 3 operating.

The development of a skilled experienced workforce in eating disorders is a key recommendation of the MOC. The NCPED has worked to develop online and face to face training and education for all clinicians including supervision in evidence based treatments. This will be paramount as newly recruited teams become operational and delivering services. As the eating disorder network continues to grow we will continue to convene biannual Eating Disorder Team network days to support training and shared learning.

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. By the end of this year there will be 9 out of 16 teams in development.

It is estimated that the cost of a core team is 1.4M each. Given the growing demand for this specialist service additional posts will be required on existing teams. An estimated cost to ensure equal access across the HSE is the provision of an additional 7 teams at a cost of 1.4 M each = 9.8M. The MOC is due to be reviewed in 2022/23 and this may impact on the number of teams required into the future.

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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