



13/10/2022

Deputy Nolan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 42737/22 To ask the Minister for Health if he will clarify the policy position of his Department concerning fetal alcohol spectrum disorder which is a lifelong neurodevelopmental disability that can result from alcohol-exposed pregnancies; the reason that Ireland remains the only country in the developed world that doesn't recognise FASD and does not have a pathway to diagnosis or the provisions of support to persons living with FASD; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

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.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a group of disorders caused by prenatal alcohol exposure and are associated with a range of lifelong physical, mental, educational, social, and behavioural difficulties. Alcohol has an adverse effect on the developing brain, and on body organs. There is no safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy.

Disability, primary care, mental health, and paediatric services are all involved in the provision of services for children and adults with FASD in Ireland, but there are no standard diagnostic policies or guidelines for diagnosis or treatment.

The HSE has developed a position paper on the prevention of FASD which outlines 14 key actions for the HSE to be achieved within the next 5 years. This includes the development of a model of care for FASD. This position paper is available on the HSE website at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/alcohol-programme/hse-position-on-prevention-of-fasd.pdf>

If you require any further information or clarification, please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Aisling Sheehan
National Lead HSE Alcohol and Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes, Health and Wellbeing, Strategy and Research