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Deputy Peter Burke,  
Dail Eireann,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**PQ Number:** 47648/22

**PQ Question:** To ask the Minister for Health the services that are available for young adults over 16 and 18 years of age with severe eating disorders; the number of beds that are available in Ireland to deal with severe eating disorders; his plans, if any, for nursing specialists in this area to be employed nationwide; and his plans, if any, to secure and increase funding for same. -Peter Burke

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Dear Deputy Burke,

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
- 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.

The National Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders (NCP-ED) aims to establish an eating disorder network (8 adult teams and 8 CAMHS teams) in accordance with the agreed Model of Care 2018. These multidisciplinary teams including nurses provide specialist eating disorder assessment and treatment in the community and are the foundations of delivering quality eating disorder care. Since 2016, over €8 million has been made available for ED posts through programme for government funding.

Three consultant-led multidisciplinary teams for eating disorders have been operating for a number of years in:

- Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CAMHS)
- Community Healthcare Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow (CAMHS)
- Community Healthcare East (adult)

We are pleased to confirm that Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County successfully completed recruitment of funded posts for adult outpatient ED services in September. They are now developing care pathways in line with the MOC and aim to accept referrals in Quarter 4 of 2022.

Two eating disorder teams in Community Healthcare West (CAMHS) and Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (adult) are at advanced stage of recruitment.

In addition, recruitment of three further teams has begun:

- South East Community Healthcare (adult)
- Community Healthcare Organisation Area 1 (adult)
- Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CAMHS)

Once established, this will see a total of nine specialist teams in place. 4 Teams will be dedicated to under 18 year olds.

A further seven teams are planned for in accordance with the Model of Care. The NCP-ED works closely to support recruitment in all Community Health Organisations where funding has been allocated. All sites are committed to filling the posts and creating community eating disorder teams. Once recruited teams are supported by NCP with training and education.

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 AC. There are plans for an Eating Disorder Unit in the new National Children's Hospital which will provide 8 additional beds in 2025.

Eating disorders have the highest mortality and morbidity within mental health and they pose significant health, social and economic cost to people with eating disorders, to their families and to society. Early intervention, evidence based care, and consistent support make a profound difference to the clinical and personal recovery of people who are affected by eating disorders, including to those in adolescence when so many eating disorders begin.

Further information and details on model of care can be accessed at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/eating-disorders/>

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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**Health Service Executive**