



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

Office of the Head of Operations,
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22nd February, 2023

Deputy Shortall,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 2519/23 – To ask the Minister for Health the services that are available to bereaved parents and families upon the loss of a child; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that families are being directed to bereavement services in other jurisdictions due to a lack of domestic services; his plans to expand domestic services such as counselling for bereaved parents and families; and if he will make a statement on the matter

- Roisin Shortall

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The HSE provide a range of bereavement supports while also working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. Support is provided in line with the Adult Bereavement Care Pyramid which highlights four levels of support that people may require following a bereavement. Levels of support range from Level 1 (community support, self-help resources) to Level 4 (specialist counselling).

For adults requiring Level 3 and 4 supports, the National Counselling service provides bereavement counselling through Counselling in Primary Care across the country. In addition to this the voluntary organisation *First Light* also provides therapeutic services to suddenly bereaved parents and family members across Ireland. First Light received €50,000 in 2022 from the HSE and provided professional counselling to over 200 individuals in 2022. The organisation *Anam Cara* which was founded by bereaved parents and provides monthly support group meetings (in person and online) also received €50,000 in 2022. It's expected that similar level of funding will be provided to both of these agencies through the HSE National Service Plan 2023.

In addition to the above, the Irish Hospice Foundation in partnership with the HSE provide a Bereavement Support line which is available to the general public. It provides a confidential safe space for individuals who have lost a loved one, friend or colleague, to talk about their loss and grief. The Irish Hospice Foundation also provide *Rosabel's Room to Talk* program which ensures that therapeutic supports are made available locally to parents and siblings impacted by the loss of a son/daughter aged 0 to 21. This initiative provides funding for 6 counselling/psychotherapy sessions per family with additional sessions approved pending a review at 6 weeks.

Finally, within the field of children's palliative care, Laura Lynn the national children's hospice provides bereavement counselling on a national basis to families in need. In 2022 Laura Lynn provided bereavement



support to over 200 families. Laura Lynn has a service arrangement with the HSE and received funding of €2.3 million euro in 2022.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seán McArt".

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations