



Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Oibrioctai

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7th March 2023

Ms. Neasa Hourigan, TD
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

By email to: neasa.hourigan@oireachtas.ie

PQ Ref: 4326/23

To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the commitment outlined in the Programme for Government to examine the reinstatement of a national director for mental health in the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for response. I apologise for the delay in responding to you and any inconvenience caused.

As you will be aware from a response to a previous PQ, the HSE had in place a National Director for Mental Health for a number of years prior to 2018. In 2018 a decision was made as part of the process of developing revised organisational arrangements to reflect the introduction of three new senior HSE roles (Chief Operations Officer, Chief Strategy & Planning Officer and Chief Clinical Officer) to undertake a realignment process in the Corporate Centre. This resulted in the establishment of the Community Operations Division which has responsibility at a national level across care groups including Mental Health, Older Persons, Disability Services etc.

In January 2020 the CEO commissioned a review of the HSE Corporate Centre. The purpose of the review was to put in place more effective structures to ensure that services are being supported effectively in line with Sláintecare. This review, paused as a result of the COVID-19, was completed in 2021. It found that an Integrated Operations function at national level is critical to ensuring that services are managed in an integrated way within identified geographies. In line with Government policy, the establishment of Regional Health Areas will further support the integration of services at a local level to the benefit of our service users.

There is a Mental Health Operations Lead within the Community Operations Division responsible for all day to day services and there is also a Clinical Lead for Mental Health. The Operations and Clinical leads work closely together to ensure delivery of services in line with the national service plan and to implement policy in this area. In addition, there are also mental health specialists at a senior level within our Integrated Operations Planning and Change & Innovation Divisions supporting Mental Health nationally to deliver improved services.

Similar structures are in place across other care groups in the HSE to ensure delivery of services with the appropriate oversight and governance.

In recognition of particular issues in CAMHS as highlighted in the Maskey Report, two new posts have been approved and are being recruited at present; Assistant National Director, Child and Youth Mental Health Lead, and a Clinical Lead for Child & Youth Mental Health. There are no plans at this time to create a National Director for Mental Health post in the HSE.

I trust that this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Damien McCallion
Chief Operations Officer