



**Stiúrtóir Náisiúnta  
Acmhainní Daonna**  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse,  
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',  
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8.

**National Director  
Human Resources**  
Health Service Executive,  
Dr Steevens' Hospital,  
Dublin 8, 08 W2A8

**www.hse.ie  
@hselive**  
t 01 6352319  
e nationalhr@hse.ie

Ivana Bacik T.D.

8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**PQ 42750/23** To ask the Minister for Health his plans to review mental health difficulties and burnout among healthcare staff. -  
Ivana Bacik

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

The HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU) is a division of National HR. It has core responsibility for the implementation of employee safety, health and well-being governance, policies, standards and interventions, and takes a lead role of behalf of the organisation in supporting the safety, health and wellbeing of HSE healthcare workers.

WHWU acknowledges the unprecedented demand causing pressure on staff in terms of service provision and resources. Some healthcare workers experience some of the symptoms of burnout. International research in the area suggests that burnout is an individual response to work related stress. Although burnout is experienced at the individual level, burnout is a contextualized experience that unfolds within a broader systemic, organisational setting (1). There is a recognition of the importance of the need for staff to be aware of and utilise the full range of staff support services available. Every effort continues to be made to balance the need to provide the services for our patients with the need to protect the wellbeing of HSE healthcare workers.

WHWU provides:

**Occupational Health services** are providing specialised medical advice and guidance in relation to COVID-19 and management of healthcare workers provide expertise to Management and Healthcare Workers on Covid-19 infection.

**National Health and Safety Function** supports the implementation of the safety management system across the HSE and HSE funded services.

**Organisational Health** supports for HSE managers are available including guidance on building good manager/employee relationships, good practice guidance for healthcare staff in managing fatigue and sleep, stress management, and self-care.

**Employee Assistance Programme** is the primary HSE service delivering psychological support to health service staff. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free, confidential and independent service for all HSE staff. The services provided by EAP include:

- Counselling
- Consultation to managers on staff wellbeing and psychosocial issues
- Critical Incident Stress Management (C.I.S.M.) Response - individual and group support
- Workshops on staff wellbeing issues

In addition, information, posters and infographics, and leaflets for HSE staff and line managers provided by WHWU (available on the HSE website) include guidance and messaging on:

- Self-care
- Managing fatigue
- Managing sleep
- Building positive and supportive relationships among healthcare workers
- Minding your Mental Health for HSE staff
- Managing Stress



- The unit has also had direct engagement through local networks of HR managers, Occupational Health, service managers, ADONs/ DONs, etc.
- Working directly with HSE services reducing healthcare worker exposure to WRS
- Interventions to identify where change has had a negative impact on teams
- Team-based approaches to support team wellness and team self-care
- Collaborative work with wider HR and HSE services to address and respond to complex workplace psychosocial risks

I trust this clarifies and is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie O'Sullivan".

**Marie O'Sullivan**  
**National HR**