



Deputy Mark Ward.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

03rd October 2023

PQ Number: 37843/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of dedicated acute mental health beds for older people per CHO; the staffing levels of mental health services for older people for the previous from 2018 to date per CHO; if there will be an increase in funding for both in Budget 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

Acute Mental Health Bed Provision

The provision of high-quality, acute inpatient care is an important element of community-based mental health services. Its purpose is to provide a range of therapeutic interventions and clinical care for service users experiencing severe and acute mental illness. Admission is offered when it is established that the individual's acute care needs cannot be treated appropriately at home, or in an alternative less restrictive setting.

In 2006, Ireland's Mental Health Policy, *A Vision for Change*, recommended that 50 acute mental health beds be provided for each mental health catchment area of 300,000 population, translating to 16.6 beds per 100,000 population. These beds could be located in a single unit, or divided across two units in the catchment area to facilitate easy access for service users and their carers (See Table 1 below).

Table 1: Recommended number of acute mental health beds according to *A Vision for Change* for inpatient care in Ireland

Acute In-Patient Beds	No. Beds
■ General Adult Mental Health (50x13) <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 35 for general adult (including rehabilitation and recovery mental health services, and co-morbid substance misuse)– 8 for mental health services for older people– 2 for people with eating disorders (may be pooled to 6 per region)– 5 for people with intellectual disability and mental illness	650
■ Child & Adolescent	80
■ Child & Adolescent High Secure	10
■ Intellectual Disability High Secure	10
■ Neuropsychiatry	8
Total	758

Note: Sufficient general hospital beds are in place but are not correctly located.



At that time, it was noted that capacity was above the recommended number per 100,000 population.

The HSE does not have a 'live' bed type database for mental health beds. Rather official reporting of mental health bed provision falls under the remit of the Mental Health Commission (MHC), who compile data on all centres which are approved under their regulations. In 2020, the MHC published a discussion paper examining access to adult mental health beds in Ireland. The report identified a lack of dedicated acute mental health beds for older people, as well as a lack of continuum-of-care resources including crisis houses, high support hostels and rehabilitation units, which may lead to inappropriate admissions to acute beds. Based on data from the MHC, no CHO region is meeting the recommended number of dedicated acute mental health beds for older people. The provision of dedicated acute mental health beds for older people is only 50% of that recommended by *A Vision for Change*. The MHC report recommended an additional 64 Beds for Older Persons.

On the night of the 23rd November 2021, the HSE undertook a bed Census to gather occupancy data on Acute Adult and Continuing Care beds in HSE-approved centres nationally. On the night of the census 63 acute beds were identified as Older Adult bed types.

The table below provides the breakdown of speciality beds existing as per Census night and existing recommendations as identified by HSE National Clinical Programmes and the MHC.

Bed type	Acute	Continuing Care	Existing recommendations (e.g National Clinical Programmes)	
Older Adult	*63		*Older Adult	*64

As part of the implementation of *Sharing the Vision*, Ireland's national mental health policy, the Acute Bed Capacity Specialist Group was established in August 2021. The Group was set up to examine Acute Inpatient (Approved Centre) bed provision, (including Paediatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs) and to make recommendations on capacity reflective of emerging models of care, existing bed resources and future demographic changes. The Specialist Group presented an interim report to the National Implementation and Monitoring Committee (NIMC) in Quarter 1, 2023.

The recommendations of the Acute Bed Capacity Report will be encompassed as part of an overall multi-year capital plan. To that end, work was undertaken in Q 2, 2023, to assess current and future planned capital investment to ensure regulatory compliance. It is anticipated that by the end of Q 3, a working group will be formally established and tasked with the development of a 10-year plan to address the existing and future capital requirements within mental health, including required acute bed capacity as identified by the Acute Bed Capacity Specialist Group.

Staffing Levels Community POLL Teams

The table below provides detail on Community Staffing levels for the 32 Psychiatry of Later Life (POLL) Teams as at 04th September 2023.



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Jul-23	Change +/-
Consultant Psychiatrist	32.3	36.3	36.95	40.2	43.5	44	46.3	48.6	47.4	49.2	47.7	+15.4
Senior Registrar	10	11	10.55	15	12	13	14.7	16.9	17.1	20.0	18.0	+8.0
Registrar/SHO	27	26	26.5	32	33.4	37.8	36	38.1	40	37.4	42.7	+15.7
Social Worker	16	25	26.9	26.8	30.7	30.2	30.65	31.1	31.1	34.2	35.4	+19.4
Clinical Psychologist	10.85	16.5	17.8	22.1	22	23.2	21.55	23.4	22.8	24.1	28.0	+17.1
Nurse	102.12	114.83	119.12	123.3	128.6	133	134.52	136.8	127.6	138.9	140.6	+38.5
Occupational Therapist	20.32	24.22	23.27	23	26.6	26.3	23.7	28.7	23.9	28.1	28.9	+8.6
Other Therapist e.g. SLT Creative /Recreational	1.2	2	1.3	1.6	3.2	3.2	5.89	3.8	5.2	6.9	6.9	+5.7
Other Staff	1	0.88	2.63	1.9	2	1.4	3.7	3.4	4	3.1	3.1	+2.1
Mental Health Support Worker	3	3	1	1	2.8	2	2	2	2	2.0	3.0	+0.0
Addiction Counsellor	0.4	0.4	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.4
Non Nursing	3.29	6.32	2.91	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.9	2	3.8	6.0	7.0	+3.7
Administrative Support Staff	30.31	35.24	33.41	34.9	36.2	38	40.2	39.7	40.1	41.8	44.1	+13.8
Total staff	257.79	301.69	302.54	324.7	343.9	354.5	362.11	374.50	365.00	391.5	405.3	+147.5
Clinical staff total	224.19	260.13	266.22	286.9	304.8	314.1	319.0	332.8	321.1	343.6	354.1	+130.0

In terms of an increase for funding, the HSE await details of Budget 2024.

Further information on NIMC and StV progress reports can be found here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8f821-national-implementation-and-monitoring-committee-steering-committee/#sharing-the-vision-reports>

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services



References:

Department of Health. Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone, 2020.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2e46f-sharing-the-vision-a-mental-health-policy-for-everyone/>

Department of Health. A Vision For Change: Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, 2006. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/mentalhealth/mental-health---a-vision-for-change.pdf>

Mental Health Commission. Access to acute mental health beds in Ireland, 2020.

https://www.mhcirl.ie/sites/default/files/2020-12/Acutebeds_report_Feb2020.pdf