

25th September 2023

Patrick Costello, TD
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ38323/23

To ask the Minister for Health for an update on the Family Support aspect of the National Drugs Strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Costello,

The Health Service Executive have been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

The National Hidden Harm Project was established by the HSE and the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) to inform service planning and improve services for children in relation to Hidden Harm. Hidden Harm is the experience of children living with and affected by parental problem alcohol and other drug use. The HSE and Tusla collaboratively developed and published the Hidden Harm Strategic Statement and the Hidden Harm Practice Guide in January 2019. There has been continued progress on National Hidden Harm Programme including:

- Development of Hidden Harm E-Learning
- Development of Hidden Harm Skills training and Train the Trainer Programme
- Commissioning of Hidden Harm services Mapping Exercise
- Supporting the Familibase National Conference
- Contribution to the policy and programmes' reports of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe on children whose parents use drugs
- Support of family and parenting programmes:
 - €135,000 allocated on a recurring basis to Familibase, Ballyfermot for intensive family support programme following a competitive tendering process. Funding was made available in 2023 for the delivery of evidence-based parenting and family support programmes under Hidden Harm. Successful proposals from CHOs 1, 4 and 9 were each awarded €180,000 recurring for three years.

On the 4th August 2023, Minister Naughton announced the allocation of €242,000 to the Health Service Executive (HSE) to fund family support measures under the national drugs strategy, Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery.

The funding has been allocated to:

- develop and broaden the range of supports for family members affected by addiction with a particular focus on virtual accessibility and supports through the RISE Foundation
- continue the coordination of training and support available for practitioners to deliver the 5-Step Method Intervention through C&F Training
- enabling a mapping of family support services nationally in order to identify priority areas and maximise and strengthen the provision of services

A series of 'Parents Matter' and 'Families Matter' webinars were hosted by the HSE National Social Inclusion Office in 2023 to support parents and carers and provide useful information around drugs and alcohol, the most recent of these was in September 2023.

Under the National Service Plans, funding has been allocated to family support programmes. In 2021 FYC €0.280 million was allocated via tender to expand provision of family support programmes in the North East Inner City, CHO4, North East region and Donegal. In 2022, €0.179 million was allocated via tender to CHO3, CHO5, CHO7, CHO9 to expand provision of family support programmes nationally (FYC €0.280 million).

Further family support programmes are available through local HSE Addiction services and partner organisations.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Eamon Keenan
National Clinical Lead-Addiction Services
HSE National Social Inclusion Office