



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
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Deputy Michael Healy-Rae,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

01ST March 2024

PQ Number: 3286/24

PQ Question: Minister we need to develop a campaign raising the awareness of the impact of parental mental health on children, while seeking to address any stigma associated with it too. We need to increase the funding for targeted intensive family support for parents facing mental health issues and we need to record the parenting status of all adults engaged with mental health services and automatically offer a referral to local family parenting support services to all parents with children under 18 who are engaging with adult mental health services. Michael Healy-Rae

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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.

It can be an overwhelming experience for a child when a parent is experiencing mental health difficulties. The reality of children living with parents with mental health difficulties can be complex and confusing. Children can experience major personal impacts as a result. That is why support and self-care is so important for children whose parents are suffering from mental health.

Available Supports

There are many supports available to children dealing with parents with mental health issues. The most appropriate service or organisation depends on what the child or young person is going through and if the parent's mental health issue is considered mild, moderate or more severe in nature.

HSE Supports

Your Mental Health Website

Information and advice about mental health and wellbeing including information on:

- types of mental health services and supports and how to access them
- self-help guides, tools and activities to support and improve mental health
- advice on how to support someone experiencing a mental health difficulty, issue or condition

Further information can be found here: www.yourmentalhealth.ie



HSE Primary Care Psychology Services

Primary Care Psychology services exist within community-based primary care centres located all over Ireland. They provide a broad range of services to children aged 0 to 17 years of age. Each primary care centre usually has a team of occupational therapists, psychologists, nurses and social workers. The aim of the psychology services is to support the psychological wellbeing of people in the local area. They can provide mental health interventions to young people with mild to moderate mental health concerns, and their parents. This includes individual therapy, group-based therapeutic work for children, adolescents and parents, and various types of assessments. The primary care centre may also offer childrens groups and informational talks where they help direct children to gain useful resources. Any healthcare professional can refer to the **HSE's Primary Care Psychology Services**. Parents can also use the referral form, available at any primary care health centre or they can make direct enquiries at the local primary care office.

Specialist CAMHS Services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, CAMHS, provide specialist mental health services to young people up to 18 years, who have a moderate to severe mental disorder that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health team. A child is referred to CAMHS by the GP when treatment at primary care level has been unsuccessful, and/or the mental health issue is so severe and complex it requires specialist services. The assessments and interventions provided by CAMHS are carried out in partnership with the child/young person and their parents/guardians. Treatment includes: intensive community-based care, talking therapy, group therapy, medication, and specialist treatments. CAMHS provide advice, information and support to parents/guardians which assists them to positively support children and young persons at home.

Non-profit organisations

The HSE also funds a number of organisations to provide support services for children dealing with mental health issues. These include:

Barnardos

Barnardos Ireland is a service for young people up to the age of 18 years. They also provide individual counselling, family support and bereavement services operating around the country.

Family Carers Ireland

Ireland's national voluntary organisation for family carers in the home.

Website: www.carersireland.com

Email: info@carersireland.com

Tel: 1800 240724

Jigsaw

The Jigsaw Support Line is available for free mental health support and advice to young people aged 12 - 25 years old, and parents or concerned adults

- Freephone 1800 544729 (from 1pm to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Text CALL ME to 086 180 3880, giving your preferred day and time for a call (from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Email help@jigsaw.ie (for responses from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Visit www.jigsaw.ie or www.jigsawonline.ie for more information



Other Organisations

Parents Plus

Parents Plus Empowering Professionals to Support Families is an Irish charity that develops evidence-based, practical, parenting courses and mental health programmes. Their mission is to improve the well-being of children and families through training. There are eight different Parents Plus Programmes for parents and young people, which are usually run as 6-12 week courses. The parenting courses are largely run free of charge or at a minimal cost to those attending.

Family Resource Centres

There are 109 Family Resource Centres in communities around the country run by the **Child and Family Agency Tusla**. They deliver community-based supports to children and families in disadvantaged areas, and some services have access to a visiting psychotherapist.

Other useful resources to assist children dealing with parental mental health issues include:

'Journey Together' is a guide for families and friends. It has advice on how to help people with mental health problems. Please see links below:

<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/mental-health-family-carer-and-supporter-guide.pdf>

<https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/services-support/supports-for-carers-family-and-friends/>

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Mc Cusker'.

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services