



1st July 2024
Jennifer Murnane O'Connor, TD
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ Ref: 26926/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons to contact the HSE's drug and alcohol helplines in each of the past ten years, by county, in tabular form; the numbers who have sought help for problem gambling; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Murnane O'Connor,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above representation which you submitted. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

By way of background, the HSE Addiction Services provide treatment for gambling, and have a strategic and operational role in the bespoke services required, and we are currently piloting initiatives in four treatment sites and intend to expand this initiative this year. The HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline is a confidential service which has both a freephone Helpline (1800 459 459) and an email support service (helpline@hse.ie). The HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline provides support, information, guidance and referral to anyone with a question or concern related to drug and alcohol use. The service is non-judgemental and offers space to talk about your situation, to explore some options and to consider your needs.

There are two important elements when interpreting this data to note:

Firstly, and as noted above, the service is confidential in nature and it is important to support the caller in whatever way possible, the service does not make note of phone numbers, Eircodes or addresses. The information on location is solely based on what is volunteered by caller, if it is requested by Helpline staff, in order to help them find a service in their locality to access, therefore, the location information is not collected in a standardised way per call. Considering this, the information on calls has been provided on an annual and national basis, as a significant number of the returns available were of unknown location.

Secondly, the nature of the Drug & Alcohol Helpline and the scope and range of supports it provides, would indicate that the majority of contacts made to the service are primarily related to a Drug & Alcohol concern, and the mention of Gambling, or request for a Gambling specific service, would usually be additional to the overarching request for Drug & Alcohol services.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All contacts	2579	3421	3401	3540	4545	5557	5282	4832	4517	5898
Gambling Related	9	6	12	8	36	74	52	50	46	61

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 Service

