



5th July 2024

Jennifer Murnane O'Connor, TD
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ Ref: 26927/24

To ask the Minister for health to provide an update on the pilot treatment programme for gambling addiction in the HSE; 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 parliamentary query which you have submitted. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

By way of background in 2023 the National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO) received €500,000 from the Department of Health to fund gambling and gaming initiatives. This was the first ever government funding provided to address these issues. In February 2023 the (NSIO) put out an invitation to tender to all Community Health Areas (CHOs) to propose pilot programmes to treat problem gambling and gaming. The proposals were reviewed by an expert panel and four CHO areas were funded in August 2023 under this initiative: CHO 2, CHO 3, CHO 4 and CHO 9.

All pilot sites experienced delays due to recruitment but three of the pilot sites CHO 2, CHO 3 and CHO 9 have been operational since January 2024. CHO 4 are still experiencing delays with recruitment but do intend to move forward with the pilot.

The progress and effectiveness of the pilots will be evaluated in a number of ways:

- Mandatory reporting via the NDTRS for KPI's
- A six month and year end report on pilot progress submitted to NSIO
- Outcome measures for both gambling and gaming
- Client satisfaction surveys.

Data is currently being compiled for the first six month evaluation of these services which will be taking place in the next month.

The data from the NDTRS has already been collected as part of this evaluation so we can share some of top line data and demographics.

In the first six months of the pilot 69 people have received treatment for problem gambling or gaming and of these 4 people have exited services and 65 people are still in treatment.

Please see some key data and demographics:

Clients by CHO:

CHO 2	24
CHO 3	24
CHO 9	22



County of residence:

Clare	5
Dublin	22
Galway	17
Kerry	1
Limerick	17
Mayo	7
Tipperary	1

Age: 33% of clients were **aged between 20–29** years and a further 33% were **aged between 30-39** years.

Nationality: 87% of clients were **born in Ireland** and 90% **spoke only English** at home.

Gender: 90% of clients identified as **male** and 10% as **female**.

Accommodation: 87% were in stable **accommodation**.

Education: 53% had achieved the **Leaving cert** as the highest level of education achieved and 20% and completed a **third level** qualification.

Employment status: 61% of clients were in **paid employment**

Referral: 61% of clients **self-referred** to services and 17% were referred by another drug treatment service.

As per Health Research Board guidelines we are not able to share the NDTRS outcome data for the four clients who have exited services as the sample size is too small and therefore could be identifying.

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