



Oifig an Chomhairleora Chliniciúil  
Náisiúnta agus Ceannaire Grúpa do  
Mheabhairshláinte

HSE, Ospidéal an Dr Stevens, Baile Átha  
Cliath 8, DO8 W2A8

Office of the National Clinical  
Advisor and Group Lead for Mental  
Health

HSE, Dr Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8,  
DO8 W2A8

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

e: [ncagl.mentalhealth@hse.ie](mailto:ncagl.mentalhealth@hse.ie)

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

Date: 12.04.2024

**PQ Number: 11559/24**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the mental health treatments available to eating disorder patients who are reliant on a nasogastric tube; 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.

In January 2018 the HSE published a National Model of Care for Eating Disorders (MOC) in partnership with College of Psychiatrists' of Ireland and Bodywhys. In the absence of a pre-existing dedicated eating disorder infrastructure or strategy, this Model of Care document has been developed in order to guide the provision of high quality, accessible and value for money eating disorder services in Ireland.

Key recommendations include the development of a national network of dedicated eating disorder teams embedded within the mental health service, a stepped model of outpatient, day patient and inpatient care provision based on clinical need, and the development of a skilled, trained workforce. In the context of the significant physical morbidity associated with eating disorders, this Model of Care also recommends a strong integration between primary care, mental health services and medical teams, including the bridging of the acute hospital and mental health service divide through mutual clinical commitments and shared pathways. Most people can and do recover from eating disorders if they receive effective, evidence based treatment from ED trained staff. While a small number of people benefit from more intensive treatment through day programmes or inpatient care, the most effective treatment setting is in the community. The MOC has a core focus on developing regional community based specialist eating disorder services provided by skilled multidisciplinary teams. Intensive treatment programmes (day programmes) will also be provided by the community specialist eating disorders teams as an alternative to inpatient psychiatric admission. Inpatient

psychiatric admission will be indicated when treatment in outpatient and day patient levels of care has been unsuccessful. It will be indicated for those who most need it and with a greater severity of illness (those at severely low weight, comorbidity that requires inpatient psychiatric treatment and those who require 24 hours structured refeeding and stabilisation). For safe integrated care the MOC recommends that adult inpatient psychiatric beds for eating disorders are co-located within acute hospitals. The inpatient psychiatric beds will be developed to provide nutritional rehabilitation through nasogastric feeding. Children and adolescents with an eating disorder diagnosis who require inpatient treatment can be referred to one of the CAMHS inpatient approved centres. Referrals are reviewed individually to determine the likely clinical benefits of admission as well as possible other treatment alternatives. There are 4 CAMHS Units across the HSE; Linn Dara, Dublin, St Josephs in Dublin, Eist Linn in Cork and Merlin Park, Galway. There are specialist eating disorder beds available in Linn Dara Approved centre and Merlin Park which support NG feeding. An 8 bed eating disorder unit for children and adolescents will be located within the New Children's Hospital.

Adults who have an eating disorder diagnosis and require inpatient care can be referred to any of the HSE's acute inpatient mental health-approved centres around the country. Adults presenting with an eating disorder can also be treated in an acute hospital if their physical health needs require this. There are also 3 dedicated beds in St Vincent's hospital ring-fenced for adults with eating disorders in Community Healthcare East (CHO6).

**Integrated Care with acute hospitals:** The NCPED has successfully secured additional funding from Women's Health Task Force to recruit medical/paediatric consultants and hospital dietitian sessions within acute hospitals to work with existing and future community eating disorder teams. The first hospital dietitian in paediatrics with dedicated sessions for eating disorders began in May 2022. The first 0.4 Consultant Paediatric post commenced with CHO4 CAMHS ED team from end Jan 2023 and second post commenced in CHO7 in October 2023. Discussion are at advanced stage for 2 adult physicians to commence in roles in CHO9 (Beaumont Hospital) and CHO6 (St. Vincent's University Hospital). Discussions are also in progress to recruit 2 further paediatric posts in CHO 2 and CHO 6. This additional skill set to teams is already proving effect and supports integrated care. The NCPED continues to work with other clinical programmes to train staff to recognise and treat people with eating disorders using best clinical Guidelines (MEED) and evidence based interventions. These advances in integrated care can provide support to people with eating disorders who require nutritional rehabilitation via NG feeding during medical and paediatric admissions.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



---

Dr Amir Niazi  
National Clinical Advisor & Group Lead for Mental Health  
Clinical Design and Innovation  
Health Service Executive