



Office of the Assistant National Director
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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
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Deputy Mary Lou McDonald,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

14th of May 2025

PQ Number: 20135/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if she will publish the Health Service Executive review of demand and capacity for the national counselling service referred to at Action 19.6 of the Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. -Mary Lou McDonald

Dear Deputy McDonald

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.

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) is a professional, confidential, counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge in all regions of the country. It was established in 2000 following the Taoiseach's apology in 1999 on behalf of the State for abuse of children in residential institutions. In 2013, the NCS expanded nationally to provide the Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC) service to adults who hold a GMS (medical) card who may be experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties.

Counselling for former residents of Mother and Baby Home Institutions.

In 2021 the National Counselling Service began offering counselling to former residents of Mother and Baby, and County Home Institutions as part of the Government agreed package of health and wellbeing measures. There is no waiting list for this service as these clients are prioritised for immediate allocation to counselling if this is their choice.

NCS demand and capacity to support former residents of mother and baby homes is reviewed continually and no resource issues or concerns have been reported to date. The table below provides a breakdown by year of the number of former residents of mother and baby homes who have accessed the NCS from 2020 up to end of March 2025.

Former Residents MBH Who accessed NCS

2020	27
2021	221
2022	89
2023	123
2024	119
2025 [up to 31.3.25]	10
Total @ 31.3.25	589



The National Counselling Service is currently collaborating with the University of Limerick on a major new [study](#) which will document the social, psychological and health needs of those with experiences of Irish Mother and Baby institutions. The objective of the study is to look at the impact on mothers and adult adoptees. An online survey was made available to participants and closed at the end of January 2025. As part of the study, both mothers and adult adoptees were surveyed about their experiences. The survey includes questions about people's experiences in the institutions, their lives since leaving the institution, and their current social and health status. It addresses topics such as stigma and isolation, the treatment received from the Irish government, and the lasting trauma associated

Yours Sincerely,

General Manager – Policy Implementation
Access and Integration Mental Health Operations