



Office of the Assistant National Director
Access and Integration

HSE Mental Health Services,
St. Loman's Hospital,
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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
Rochtain agus Comhtháthú: Seirbhísí
Meabhairshláinte FSS

Ospidéal Naomh Loman
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Deputy Pádraig Rice.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

26th February 2025

PQ Number: 6326/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health to provide details in respect of the policies in place to ensure that people with autism are not discriminated against in mental health services; if she will provide information on the specific training provided to staff; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Pádraig Rice

Dear Deputy Rice,

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 national mental health policy, "Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone," emphasises the importance of inclusive mental health services that cater to the diverse needs of all individuals, including those with autism. The policy advocates for person-centered care and aims to bring about tangible improvements in mental health outcomes. More information is available here

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2e46f-sharing-the-vision-a-mental-health-policy-for-everyone/>

Additionally, the Health Service Executive (HSE) has developed the "Best Practice Guidance for Mental Health Services," supported by an extensive training programme. This programme includes modules designed to introduce mental health professionals to best practices, ensuring they are well-equipped to provide appropriate care to individuals with autism. The HSE also has a dedicated web resource for people with autism and their supporters:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/autism/assessment-and-support/>.

Regarding staff training, various organizations offer specialized programs to equip mental health professionals with the skills necessary to support individuals with autism effectively. For instance, the National Institute of Intellectual Disability Studies (NIIDS) provides a comprehensive "Autism Programme" endorsed by Social Care Ireland and the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland. This program offers evidence-based strategies tailored to the unique needs of autistic individuals.



There are also seven online training courses for HSE staff (HSE and internal HSE staff training programmes) that are aimed specifically for those working with people with autism or their supporters

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Tony McCusker
General Manager
Access and Integration; HSE Mental Health Services