



Office of the Assistant National Director
Access and Integration

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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
Rochtain agus Comhtháthú: Seirbhísí
Meabhairshláinte FSS
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Deputy Roderic O’Gorman
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

23rd July 2025

PQ Number: 40686/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if the entitlement to counselling for survivors and former residents of mother and baby institutions, via the National Counselling Service, as provided for in the Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, is time limited; and if she will make a statement on the matter. –Roderic O’Gorman

Dear Deputy O’Gorman

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 HSE regional health areas. 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 to provide the Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC) service to adults who hold a GMS card who may be experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties.

Counselling to 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 well-being measures.

As per the Action plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions counselling for former residents continues to be provided by the HSE National Counselling Service. Clients are prioritised for allocation to the next available counselling place if this is their choice.

Counselling is available in person, by telephone or online through secure video to former residents of Mother and Baby Homes who are living in Ireland.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-counselling->



Access to counselling for former residents of Mother and Baby Homes may be made by direct self-referral. Written referrals from health care professionals such as GPs are also accepted. <https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/services-support/ncs/self-referral/>

As a public service in high demand, with limited resources, all counselling provided by the HSE National Counselling Service is by necessity time limited. The National Counselling Service adopts an ethical approach to managing counselling duration and is mindful of the importance of ensuring access to as many people as possible, as such, open-ended counselling contracts are not routinely offered.

For counselling provided to Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, as with all counselling services provided by the NCS, the duration of counselling will vary and is determined by the assessed therapeutic needs of each individual.

Counselling contracts including duration of counselling are agreed with each client based on individual clinical assessment of need.

When a counselling contract comes to an end former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions are welcome to re-engage for further episodes of counselling where clinically appropriate.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services