



13/08/2025

Deputy Rice
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 41314/25 To ask the Minister for Health the mandatory required training that all HSE clinicians must undertake in order to support patients living with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

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.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a group of disorders caused by prenatal alcohol exposure and are associated with a range of lifelong physical, mental, educational, social, and behavioural difficulties. There are currently no standardised training, clinical guidelines, or service pathways for FASD in Ireland.

The HSE is actively promoting training opportunities available at the University of Edinburgh, which provides Europe's first Postgraduate Certificate in FASD. The University of Edinburgh has offered the HSE discounted training places for the September 2025 intake, and this opportunity is being promoted across the HSE's clinical programmes and services. The HSE is also supporting the training being rolled out by the Mid Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force with health, education and social care professionals.

In 2022, the HSE conducted a survey with health, education and social care professionals in order to ascertain their knowledge and awareness about FASD, and to understand the needs and supports required. A total of 760 staff consented to participate in the survey, and 702 staff completed the survey questions. The majority of participants worked in health care (69%), with 15% from social care and 11% from education. Just over one fifth (n=151; 21.5%) of respondents reported having received training on FASD. Among those who reported having received training, a higher proportion reported training pre-qualification (n=78) than post-qualification (n=60), with 19 reporting both pre and post qualification training in FASD.

A high proportion of survey respondents - 77% of total or 86.1% of those who answered this question - reported interest in future training in FASD. The HSE is exploring how a scalable and sustainable model for building capacity of Ireland's health and social care workforce to work with those affected by FASD can be built.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Aisling Sheehan

National Lead HSE Alcohol and Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes, Health and Wellbeing