



Deputy Barry Heneghan.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

31st March 2025

PQ Number: 12948/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will urgently review and address the severe inadequacies in Ireland's eating disorder services, particularly the lack of inpatient beds and the absence of integrated community-based supports; if he will commit to increasing the number of dedicated public inpatient beds for eating disorder treatment; and the immediate steps being taken to ensure those suffering from eating disorders have access to timely and appropriate care. - Barry Heneghan

Dear Deputy Heneghan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in response to the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE has prioritised eating disorder services as part of National Clinical Programmes (NCPs) and has established a specific clinical programme for eating disorders. The NCPs aim to develop person-centred, integrated care through a clinician-led, evidence-based approach to service reform. The need for specialist services is reflected in Sharing the Vision and more recently in the new Programme for Government. 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.

Most people can and do recover from eating disorders if they receive effective, evidence-based treatment from eating disorder (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 HSE's core focus is on developing regional community-based specialist eating disorder services across CAMHS and adult populations (in line with MOC) provided by skilled multidisciplinary teams, through the National Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders. The table below outlines the teams by HSE Regional area.

Eating Disorders Regional teams by HSE Regions

Region /population	Current Eating Disorders Teams
HSE Dublin and North East: (1,187,082 population)	Cavan Monaghan – adult team
	Dublin North City and West – CAMHS Team
	Dublin North County – Adult Team



HSE Dublin and Midlands: (1,077,639 population)	Dublin South City and West/Kildare/West Wicklow – CAMHS Team
New 2025	Dublin South West/Kildare – Adult Team in recruitment 2025
New 2025	Midlands - Adult Team in recruitment 2025
HSE Dublin and South East: (971,093 Population)	Carlow Kilkenny/ Tipperary South/Waterford Wexford – Adult Team
	Dublin South and Wicklow – CAMHS Dublin South and Wicklow Adult Team
HSE Mid-West: (413,059 Population) New 2025	CAMHS ED team – Midwest in recruitment 2025
HSE South West: (740,614 population)	CAMHS team Adult team
HSE West and North West: (759,652 population)	CAMHS Team – Galway/Roscommon Adult Team – Sligo/Leitrim/South Donegal

Notes on Table

- While we develop specialist teams across areas there are a number of ANPs and other dedicated staff working in Cavan CAMHS, Donegal, Midlands, South Tipperary CAMHS that are preparing sites and attending all our training and education.
- Since the MOC was published (2018) the population has grown, and this will be reflected in any review.

In terms of current in-patient Service provision, Children and young people with an eating disorder diagnosis who require inpatient treatment can be referred to one of four regional CAMHS inpatient approved centres. These are: Linn Dara Approved Centre, Dublin, St Josephs Approved Centre in Dublin, Eist Linn Approved Centre in Cork and Merlin Park Approved Centre in Galway. All four CAMHS units manage and treat ED cases that are admitted when treatment in the community is not indicated. Two of the four units can provide additional care up to and including nasogastric feeding (NG). The other two units are actively training nursing staff and recruiting dietician staff that will enable them to also administer NG feeding treatment plans within their respective units as well.

As part of the new CHI hospital development, there will be additional beds as part of a new 20 bedded CAMHS inpatient approved centre which will be colocated within the new children's hospital.

Currently there are three specialist Eating Disorder beds based at St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin for adults with eating disorders who are in need of inpatient admission. In other parts of the country, 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 centre's around the country. Referrals are reviewed individually to determine the likely clinical benefits of admission as well as possible other treatment alternatives. It is also important to note that people with eating disorders who are medically unstable and require medical admission for acute medical stabilisation, and those who require intensive initial refeeding, including nasogastric feeding, are admitted to HSE acute and general hospitals.

In line with *Sharing the Vision* (StV), the national mental health policy, an expert group was established to examine Acute Inpatient -bed provision (including the NCPED for adult eating disorder beds) and to make recommendations on capacity, reflective of emerging models of care, existing bed



resources and future demographic changes, with such recommendations being aligned with Sláintecare.

A report on acute bed capacity was produced and presented to the National Implementation and Monitoring Committee (NIMC) for StV and is currently under consideration.

Additional Eating Disorder and Family Supports for those in crisis

Established CAMHS and Adult ED teams have active wait list support initiatives through the provision of psychoeducation resources, signposting to Bodywhys and liaising with primary care.

Family Supports: Each team offers family supports and education, some teams have dedicated group programmes in place. First line evidence based intervention for children is Family Based Therapy (FBT). This is provided by all ED CAMHS Teams. All families are provided with information and resources and are signposted to use HSE Self Care App. All families are signed posted to completed PiLAR online family education programme with Bodywhys.

Body whys: The HSE provides funding annually to Body whys, the national advocacy agency for people with eating disorders and their families. Body whys provide a range of services (support groups, online groups, email and family programmes) for adults and young people with eating disorders, and their families.

The HSE also supports Body whys to run the Pillar (Peer Led Resilience) Programme, a 4-week online modular based programme for parents, friends and carers of a person with an eating disorder to build resilience and gain support in their role as a supporter/friend. In 2022, 926 families attended the programme.

The NCPED is working with Bodywhys to establish a national reference group of carer and service users.

Guidance from the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) and Bodywhys for GPs on the Assessment and Management of eating disorders in Primary Care is available here: <https://www.bodywhys.ie/for-professionals/resource-for-gps/>

HSE Eating Disorder Self Care App

In March 2019, the HSE launched the first [Self Care App](#) which provides valuable information for those:

- with an eating disorder caring for someone with an eating disorder
- worried about developing an eating disorder
- diagnosed or are recovering from an eating disorder

Further information on the HSE National Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders can be found here: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/eating-disorders/>

Further information about the Self Help App is available here: [HSE Eating Disorder Self Help App](#)

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Braham
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Access and Integration; HSE Mental Health Services