

Deputy Paul Murphy,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

19th May 2025

PQ 22568/25

To ask the Minister for Health the reason gambling is not covered as a primary addiction under the tier 4 national beds scheme; and if she will consider doing so.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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.

Tier 4 services represent an important element of the response for people presenting for the treatment of Addiction related problems. However, it should be pointed out that the majority of people presenting are provided with care in community based addiction services.

In relation to people presenting to services with problems associated with gambling, recent developments have seen the allocation of specific resources from the Department of Health to expand treatment provision in the community. Pilot initiatives are operational in the Midwest, South West and Dublin North regions. The South East opened a new service last week and other areas around the country will be developing initiatives specifically targeting gambling and gaming in 2025.

In 2022, the HRB produced a report on treatment provision for problem gambling <https://www.hrb.ie/news-stories/hrb-analyse-treatment-for-problem-gambling/>. This report identified that 2999 had received treatment for problem gambling in the years 2008 – 2019. They identified that 56% of those had received treatment in residential units, essentially Tier 4 services. People with gambling related problems have received treatment in Tier 4 services in the past.

Any treatment provided for an individual must be based on a comprehensive assessment and this will determine the most appropriate treatment pathway. The recent resources provided for gambling and gaming initiatives will expand the range of services available and this should be reflected in treatment figures in the coming years.

The HSE published a comprehensive literature review on the 'Interventions, Approaches and Guidelines for Gambling and Gaming Addiction: An Evidence Review' on 1st May 2025. This report identified the benefits of psychological interventions, particularly Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, both alone and in conjunction with Motivational Interviewing. The report will help guide service responses in the future and is available here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/researchreports/interventions-approaches-and-guidelines-for-gambling-an-evidence-review-2025.pdf>

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Eamon Keenan
National clinical Lead for HSE Addiction Services