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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
Rochtain agus Comhtháthú: Seirbhísí
Meabhairshláinte FSS

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Deputy David Cullinane.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

09th June 2025

PQ Number: 28654/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the all-in cost of 100 WTE counsellors with the national counselling service; the number of other grade posts required to support this expansion on a pro rata basis; and the cost of these posts. -David Cullinane

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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 provides Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC) to adult patients experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties who present in the primary care setting. Currently all adults in receipt of a medical card are eligible for the service. CIPC is available in each HSE CHO area and provides up to eight counselling sessions with a professionally qualified counsellor/therapist. CIPC counsellors utilise a range of counselling interventions depending on presenting issues and assessed needs.

Depression and anxiety constitute the main reasons for referral. It is generally accepted that 90% of mental health needs can successfully be addressed in primary care settings, and for many, CiPC therefore provides a person-centred, high-quality service 'in the right place, at the right time', in line with the Sláintecare reform programme. For GPs, CiPC offers an alternative to medication for people presenting with mild to moderate mental health difficulties.

Currently CIPC service is available to the adult GMS population only. It receives on average 17, 660 referrals per year.

The table below provides the cost of an additional 100 WTE counsellors with the national counselling service. In addition costing is provided for additional posts required to support this expansion.

25 additional Senior Counsellor/Therapists would be required to ensure appropriate clinical governance. In order to ensure that the service can function effectively appropriate administrative support is required. This is estimated to be at least one Grade IV staff officer to support 10 clinical staff and 1 Grade VI per 5 staff officers to coordinate service provision. Number of staff required and



costings for an expansion of the service by 100 WTE counsellor/therapists are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Costing for Expansion of CIPC x 100 WTE Counsellor/Therapists

Grade Description	Total WTE	Total cost including 10% non pay allowance
Counsellor/Therapist (National Services)	100.00	9,181,503
Counsellor/Therapist Senior (Nat Serv)	25.00	2,738,705
Grade IV	10.00	575,511
Grade VI	2.00	155,773
Total	137	12,651,493

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

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