



Deputy Grace Boland
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

29th September 2025

PQ Number: 52481/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the way in which her Department is ensuring that mental health supports are available to students from diverse backgrounds; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Grace Boland

Dear Deputy Boland

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 offers a number of supports and services aimed at students (or young people more broadly) from diverse backgrounds. These include people from different ethnic communities, migrants, refugees, LGBTI+ young people, protection applicants / people in Direct Provision, etc. Below is a breakdown of what supports are available,

Social Inclusion Services

- The HSE's Intercultural Health programme works to ensure healthcare (including mental health services) is equitable, accessible, and respectful for people of diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Multilingual supports & translation services: The HSE provides interpreting services and translates essential health information into multiple languages so that people from non-English speaking backgrounds can access and understand supports.
- Ethnic data collection: The HSE has a programme of work to collect data on ethnicity in health services, which helps in tailoring services, and in identifying inequalities.

Programs for Migrants, Refugees, Direct Provision

- Be Aware, Be Well – Migrant Mental Health & Wellbeing Initiative: A community-based project to improve mental health outcomes for ethnic minorities via awareness-raising, peer support, capacity building etc.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) – MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support): For protection applicants in reception or direct provision centres; includes individual & group counselling, workshops, trauma-informed care etc.
- Foróige – Youth Mentoring for Direct Provision/IPAS: Matches young people living in Direct Provision with volunteer mentors to support their social and emotional well-being, integration into community etc.



- Services for people displaced by crises (e.g. supports for those fleeing Ukraine via the Irish Red Cross) offering specifically tailored mental health and wellbeing supports.

Supports for LGBTQ+ Young People

- The HSE has guidance for getting help if you are LGBTI+, including counselling or therapy, family supports, etc.
- The HSE Rainbow Badge initiative: staff in certain HSE services (e.g. CAMHS / children & adolescent mental health services) can wear this badge to signal that they are supportive of LGBTI+ youth, so young people can know there's someone who is recognised as "safe" to talk to.
- Several non-profit / NGO partners such as BeLonGTo, LGBT Ireland, TENI etc., work with or are signposted by the HSE for LGBTI+ young people to access tailored supports. [\[2\]](#) Culturally Competent Training for HSE Staff
- The HSE has an Intercultural Awareness e-Learning Programme for staff that includes modules such as "Understanding migrant mental health & wellbeing", "Refugees, protection applicants & trauma", "Inclusive practices and intercultural awareness" etc. This helps ensure that the people delivering services are more aware of cultural, linguistic, religious, and social diversity, and of the potential additional challenges faced by students from diverse backgrounds.

While many supports are for "people of all ages" or specifically "young people / children", some are more directly relevant for students:

- LGBTI+ students may use HSE resources for sexuality, gender identity, counselling, therapy, etc.
- Migrant or refugee student populations in Direct Provision can access the Foróige mentoring, IOM MHPSS, peer support etc.
- Awareness, translation and cultural sensitivity in more "mainstream" mental health services help reduce barriers for students from diverse backgrounds.

I hope this is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

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