



Seirbhisí, Meabhairshláinte,
Le Lár Tíre, An Lú, An Mhí,

Coimpléasc Naomh Bríd, Baile Átha Fhirdia,
Co Lú, A92 DRN0

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Ref: MLM MH 337/2025

Deputy Ruairí Ó'Murchú
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

13th October 2025

Re: PQ 47656/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the proposals being considered for mental health services in county Louth; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó'Murchú,

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 outlined the position as follows;

Please find attached Briefing that outline proposals being considered for Louth Meath Mental Health Services.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Mairead O'Neill,
Head of Mental Health Services



BRIEFING NOTE
Confidential – For Information Only
MLM MH MLM 337/2025

Briefing Request Notification	Re: PQ 47656/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the proposals being considered for mental health services in county Louth; and if she will make a statement on the matter.
Briefing For	Deputy Ruairí Ó'Murchú
Background	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

Briefing	Service improvements overall for Louth Meath CAMHS. ▪ CAMHS New Service Development Posts 2025: Derogated posts being recruited (Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Senior Psychologist, and Clerical Grade 4). ▪ CAMHS Hub- Model of Care Acute Intervention Hub: Three posts recruited (Consultant, Social Worker and Clinical Nurse Specialist) and recruitment progressing for clerical post. Pilot Site to commence in Quarter 2 of 2025 regarding the Model of Care Acute Intervention Hub. ▪ Eating Disorders Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPS)- CAMHS: Two new ANP posts were recruited in February 2025 with one Meath and one Louth. ▪ CAMHS Intellectual Disability (MHID) Consultant: MHID Consultant Psychiatrist commenced in January 2024. ECD continues to liaise with National MHID to seek Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) posts. ▪ ADHD ANP Post: ANP post commenced for ADHD (Co. Louth) in June 2024. ▪ Healthlink: Healthlink was introduced across all six community teams to allow for easier referral pathway from GPs to the teams. Current Challenge -Louth Meath CAMHS s. ▪ Population: Available capacity to meet population need. Louth Meath CAMHS require staffing based on Actual Clinical WTE per 10,000, referrals and per accepted referrals per 10,000. ▪ Deprivation areas. ▪ Prioritisation/ risk management of cases. ▪ Accommodation: Clinical space for CAMHS Teams, Hub and CAMHS ID. ▪ Electronic Records and Waiting List System. ▪ Increased referrals due to neurodiversity needs (ADHD). ▪ Increased referrals related to Autistic Spectrum Disorder and complex cases (*Meath, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Liaison
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Service, legal and Tusla cases).

- Access required to Specialist beds and services e.g., to Eating Disorder Residential Services and Dietetics, CAMHS inpatient beds, CAMHS Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

- **Liaison Mental Health Services/ Liaison Psychiatry Service:**

There is a liaison service operating from Monday to Friday in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda. There is a self-harm nurse allocated to Our Lady's Hospital, Navan.

- **Approved Centres- Acute Psychiatric Unit and Continuing Care/ Rehabilitation Unit:**

There are two approved centres based in the Drogheda Department of Psychiatry (Acute Psychiatric Unit) and St. Ita's Ward in St. Brigid's Hospital Ardee (Continuing Care/ Rehabilitation) that serve the Counties of Louth and Meath. DDOP and St Ita's Ward are registered as approved centres with the Mental Health Commission (MHC). The DDOP provides acute in-patient services for both Louth and Meath and service a population of approximately over 365,000 (Census 2022). The DDOP has 46 beds (34 general adult, 8 Psychiatry of Old age, 4 high observation) and has a ratio of 12.9 beds per 100,000 based on the 2022 Census. This bed provision is the lowest in the country. It is noted that the average bed provision is >20 per 100,000. In 2023, there were 540 admissions to the DDOP with an average length of stay of 23 days.

Louth Meath Mental Health Services can confirm that any person who attends the Drogheda Department of Psychiatry have a full psycho-social assessment by a medical doctor. Based on the outcome of this full assessment, a clinical determination is made on whether an admission is required to the Drogheda Department of Psychiatry or whether it is determined clinically that follow up care is required by the Community Mental Health Services or Primary Care (including General Practitioner) or the Acute General Hospital.

- 1. Emergency Departments and Liaison Mental Health Services**

- **Emergency Departments (EDs):**

When people are experiencing a mental health crisis, they will often choose to attend EDs to access mental healthcare in the absence of alternative pathways. There is significant work progressed to achieve the standards of mental health care set out in Sláintecare and Sharing the Vision. The rollout of the National Clinical Programme for Self-Harm and Suicide Related Ideation (NCPSHI), liaison mental health services, development of crisis resolution services in the community, enhancement of digital mental health supports and rollout of the suicide crisis assessment nurse service in primary care are potential alternative treatment pathways that are at differing levels of development and implementation across the Dublin & North East Region.

In General, ED prioritise and treat the most unwell patients and those with life-threatening illnesses first. Some people who present to an ED may be known by community mental health services and there may be enhanced coordination and care planning between ED staff and both inpatient and outpatient mental health services required. For patients with physical and mental health needs, both the National Clinical Programme for Self-Harm and Suicide Related Ideation (NCPSHI)

and Emergency Medicines Programme (EMP) promote the use of parallel assessments, whereby a mental health professional can work alongside ED staff or medical staff in meeting patients' needs. Support is also provided in general hospital settings through liaison mental health services. For people presenting at an emergency department when in crisis, following self-harm or with suicidal ideation, all such presentations will follow the emergency care pathway which includes the following steps:

- Patient triage (nurse assessment using standardised tools that determine the clinical priority of the person according to the severity of their presentation).
- Emergency medicine clinician assessment (emergency medicine doctor or nurse practitioner).
- Investigations (tests).
- Treatment.
- Referral to appropriate speciality e.g. liaison mental health services for further speciality assessment
- Decision to admit or discharge the person with appropriate follow up (hospital or community mental health services).

○ **Liaison Mental Health Services/ Liaison Psychiatry:**

Liaison mental health services provide a specialist service for individuals attending EDs in a crisis and is available to all age groups. LMHS manage ED presentations which occur in areas overlapping mental and physical healthcare.

○ **National Clinical Programme for Self-Harm and Suicide Related Ideation (NCPSHI):**

People are referred to the NCPSHI following medical triage and assessment within the ED. The NCPSHI and Emergency Medicines Programme promote the use of parallel assessments, whereby a mental health professional can work alongside ED staff or medical staff in meeting patients' needs. The NCP aims to ensure that all patients who present to the ED following self-harm or with suicidal ideation will receive a prompt biopsychosocial assessment, their next of kin will receive support and advice on suicide prevention, the patient will be linked with the next appropriate care, and both the patient and their general practitioner will receive a written plan of care. The NCP further aims to ensure that an emergency safety plan is developed in collaboration with the patient and supportive adult and a follow-up telephone contact is made to the patient within 24 hours.

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) Emergency Department (ED) Report reflects that Model 3 and Model 4 Hospitals in the DNE Region fulfil the standards of the NCPSHI during working hours. The MHC Report has highlighted that we need to provide parallel assessments out of hours via the psychiatry on-call service. The DNE Region is working to develop the expansion to a 7 day a week service operating a 12-hour day should development funding be secured to support this initiative. There is also a need to develop policies or procedures, in place to support mental health assessment in the DNE Regional Local Injury Units. Examples of Louth Meath IHA initiatives to support alternate pathways and out of hour's services include:

- MHS have innovatively reconfigured existing resources to

support people experiencing mental health crisis through the provision of a 7-day service in Meath of an acute Day hospital Service on the grounds of Our Lady's Hospital Navan.

- Louth Meath is a pilot site for the Model of Care for Older Persons Liaison with a 0.5 consultant and 1 Clinical Nurse Specialist. The Consultant post is in place providing a liaison service 2 days a week. The Clinical Nurse Specialist post is due to commence in September 2025 following return from maternity leave.
- Training and Education is provided to acute hospitals on mental health legislation and mental health presentations.

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) Emergency Department (ED) Report identified the need to improve the environment in the ED. The DNE Region recognises the need for appropriate space for mental health assessments within EDs that meet the privacy, dignity and safety needs for those with acute mental health presentations. DNE is actively engages with regional and national estates colleagues.

Environment- PLAN Standards	
Hospital	Dedicated Assessment Room in ED
Our Lady of Lourdes	Yes - space is limited and dedicated mental health liaison team accommodation is required.
Our Lady's hospital Navan	yes

○ **Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurses (SCAN):**

While continuing to maintain and further improve the NCP within the acute hospital EDs, the updated NCPSHI model of care (MOC) now extends into the community where GPs play a central role in the recognition of suicide-related behaviours and interventions with patients. An important feature in the updated MOC is the incorporation of the existing Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse (SCAN) service within the NCPSHI. SCANS provide assessment and support to GP patients who present with suicide-related thoughts, who might otherwise be referred to the emergency department or community mental health services. The SCAN service is being rolled out nationally as part of the model of care for the NCP (2022). There are 22 funded CNS (clinical nurse specialist) posts providing a SCAN service across the HSE (7 in HSE Dublin and North East, 2 in HSE Dublin and Midlands, 5 in HSE Dublin and South East, 4 in HSE South West and 4 in HSE West and North West).

The SCAN service is in keeping with national mental health policy, *Sharing the Vision* (2020) and *Connecting for Life, Ireland's national strategy to reduce suicide*. A public consultation to inform the development of Ireland's next suicide reduction policy is underway. 2025 funding has been secured to expand SCAN services to CAMHS, adults and members of travelling community. Further information can be accessed at

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/self-harm-suicide-related-ideation/>

- **Media – Suicide reporting:** When covering the topic of suicide, the HSE recommends that media adhere to Samaritans Ireland Media Guidelines for

Reporting Suicide - research evidence shows that certain types of media depictions, such as explicitly describing a method, sensational and excessive reporting, can lead to imitational suicidal behaviour among vulnerable people. The topic of suicide should always be approached with care and compassion. It is important to use sensitive and non-stigmatising language when engaging in a conversation, talking or writing about suicide. Read more from the [HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention](#). For more information on suicide prevention training programmes available from the HSE, visit www.nosp.ie/training. Access 'Let's Talk About Suicide' – a free online suicide prevention training programme is available from the HSE NOSP.

2. Crisis Resolution Services:

The Model of Care for Crisis Resolution Services (CRS) was launched in May 2023 and has two key interconnected service components: Crisis Resolution Teams and Crisis Cafés (branded nationally as Solace Cafés). The pilot implementation of the Crisis Resolution Services Model of Care is currently underway across five learning sites and an independent evaluation of these sites is in process, which when completed will inform and support the future scaling up of these services nationally. Crisis Resolution Teams (CRTs) are community-based multidisciplinary teams that provide rapid assessment and intensive support to people who are in a mental health crisis. The team can provide an alternative to inpatient admission in the service user's own environment and/or in a community setting, with the active involvement of service users and their family, carers and supporters, and interagency liaison with local partners. There are currently five operational Crisis Resolution Teams (Sligo / Leitrim, Cork North Lee Cork South Lee, Waterford and South Dublin / Wicklow).

Solace Cafés provide an out-of-hours friendly and supportive community crisis prevention and crisis response service in the evenings and at weekends in a café style/non-clinical safe environment. The Solace Café service supports individuals and their family members/carers to deal with an immediate crisis and to plan safely drawing on their strengths, resilience and coping mechanisms to manage their mental health and well-being. Attendees can access coping strategies, one-to-one peer support, psychosocial and recovery supports. Those who attend will be signposted to relevant mental health and well-being services and community supports, as required. Solace Cafés accept self-referrals and referrals from healthcare practitioners and community partner agencies.

3. Talking Therapies:

This Model of Care builds on a team-wide and multidisciplinary approach to the delivery of talking therapies, as a core offering within our specialist mental health services. When implemented it will ensure greater integration, consistency and equity of access to talking therapies, while maintaining opportunities for local innovation. The HSE is prioritising investment to demonstrate this Model of Care across participating Community Mental Health Teams. It commenced in 2021.

4. Louth Meath Mental Health Services Development Plans 2025- 2030:

- **Drogheda Department of Psychiatry- 10 Bedded Extension:** Planning Permission has been granted for a two-storey extension, and this will include ten additional beds and ancillary works. Major Capital Development Stage 2B is not completed. This project for Louth Meath Mental Health Services would be very significant in terms of acute mental health bed requirements and service provision for a highly populated catchment area of Counties Louth and Meath.
- **Dundalk Primary Care Centre (PCC):** A new PCC premises recently received planning permission (Carroll Village), and this will become the Sector Team Headquarters in Dundalk (Louth).
- **Navan Primary Care Centre (PCC):** A new PCC premises recently received planning permission (Balmoral), and this will become the Sector Team Headquarters for Meath with planned opening in 2027. This will be the future CAMHS Headquarters.
- **Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** In 2025, a new Adult ADHD Team has been approved to cover Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan in line with allocated workforce and Clinical Care Programmes.
- **Liaison Psychiatry Service:** In 2025, there is a plan to develop a population based liaison service model that would operate a 24 hours/ 7 days service in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda in line with allocated workforce and Clinical Care Programmes.
- **CAMHS Service:** In 2025, there is a plan to develop a population based CAMHS service model. In 2025, there is a plan to implement the CAMHS Hub and CAMHS ID service in line with allocated workforce and Clinical Care Programmes.
- **Memory Technology Resource Room (MTRR):** Additional funding has been secured for the MTRR Programme for Louth Meath Mental Health Services from 2025 onwards.
- **Talking Therapies Programme- LMMHS:** The demonstration site for Talking Therapies Programme commenced across Louth and Meath. The Talking Therapies programme enables enhanced access to a quality range of evidence-based talking therapies delivered by appropriately qualified talking therapists. The Talking Therapy Team is based on a Hub and Spoke model. The Hub roles consist of a Principal Psychologist Specialist, and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner. The Spokes for the demonstration sites include three Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Cognitive Behavioural Therapists (CBT). Spokes are accessible to the catchment teams in Dundalk, East Drogheda and Kells/Trim.
- **Open Dialogue Programme-LMMMHS:** The Open Dialogue Programme commenced across Louth and Meath in 2023 and is operational. Early Intervention Psychosis Programme (Co. Meath) was commenced in 2018 and is operational.
- **Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse (SCAN) Service:** The Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse (SCAN) Service commenced in Drogheda and Navan and is operational. The SCAN service in Navan commenced in January 2024. It provides services to a number of GP practices in Navan and surrounding areas and is provided by a CNS. The SCAN service in



- Drogheda had commenced in 2023, providing supports to GP practices in the Drogheda area but has recently paused due to Maternity leave – due to recommence quarter 3 2025.
- **Connecting for Life Louth Meath Mental Health Services:** Action Plan being implemented and Resource Office for Suicide Prevention (ROSP) working with multi-agencies. In 2025, work to commence to implement the Traveller Crisis Response Plan in Louth in conjunction with Travelers in Louth.
 - **Long-term and Short- Term Accommodation Plan:**
New Navan Primary Care Centre (PCC) in Balmoral will accommodate the Meath CAMHS, CAMHS Hub and CAMHS ID.
CAMHS Ashbourne Team to use clinical bookable space in Ashbourne following renovations on a short-term basis and long-term plan to be identified.
South Louth CAMHS long-term accommodation plan to be identified.
 - **National Child and Youth Mental Health Office Action Plan:** Louth Meath CAMHS to support implementation and to be involved in the pilot of electron healthcare records and/or electronic waiting list system.
 - **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT):** DBT introduced across Louth and Meath CAMHS.
 - **Family Based Treatment (Eating Disorders):** 44 clinicians were trained in Louth and Meath CAMHS Teams.
 - **Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Level 1:** 18 staff completed training in Louth and Meath CAMHS Teams.
 - **You Are Not Alone (YANA):** YANA groups commenced for parents of young people with Eating Disorders.
 - **Crisis Resolution Team:** A Business Case was submitted for funding of a crisis resolution team across Louth and Meath in 2021, and this was resubmitted in 2022 to National. However, the service was advised that no future funding was being provided pending an independent evaluation of this model of care being completed. Any future funding decisions are pending the outcome of this evaluation.
 - **Pieta:** Pieta provide a range of services nationally to people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, those who engage in self-harm, and those bereaved by suicide. All of Pieta services are provided free of charge, and no referral is needed. Early in 2024, Pieta requested assistance with sourcing a suitable space for the face-to-face service in Louth and Meath. Louth Meath Mental Health Services contacted a number of organisations in the community and the Redeemer Centre in Dundalk came forward and offered a space. Pieta considered the Redeemer Centre to be the most suitable space for their service and contacted the Redeemer directly. The service was set up in the Redeemer Centre in October of last year. Louth Meath Mental Health Services also link regularly with Pieta's SBLO and signpost to the service where appropriate.



Briefing Compiled by:	Mairéad O' Neill, Head of Service, Louth Meath and Midlands Mental Health Services	Briefing Date	13/10/2025
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