



Oifig an Chomhairleora Chliniciúil
Náisiúnta agus Ceannaire Grúpa do
Mheabhairshláinte

HSE, Ospidéal an Dr Stevens, Baile Átha
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Deputy Ken O' Flynn,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

23rd September 2025

PQ Number: 48358/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the proportion of older adults who present with clinically significant depressive symptoms; the share of those who receive timely access to mental health supports; and whether her Department has set specific targets for improving access to geriatric psychiatry and psychological services. -Ken O'Flynn

Dear Deputy O'Flynn

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.

National data on depression diagnoses in older adults is not currently collated. However, available research shows that depressive symptoms are a significant issue in this population. The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) found that approximately 10% of older adults reported clinically significant depressive symptoms, with a further 18% experiencing subthreshold symptoms. In addition, a 2024 Aware survey reported that one third of respondents over the age of 65 experienced mild to moderate depression.

Access to timely assessment and intervention is monitored through national key performance indicators (KPIs). The KPI standard is that ≥95% of accepted referrals are offered an appointment and seen within 12 weeks. The national outturn for 2023 was 88.3%. Most recent performance was 86.8% in July 2024 and 89.0% in August 2024, indicating progress toward the target but also variation across individual services.

With regard to future targets, the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland Faculty of Psychiatry of Old Age has convened a working group to review and update KPIs in this area. In addition, the office of the National Clinical Advisor and Group Lead for Mental Health is undertaking a national gap analysis of services for older people. This work will inform a five-year implementation plan, which will set clear targets for improving access to psychiatry and psychological services for older adults.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Amir Niazi
National Clinical Advisor & Group Lead for Mental Health
Clinical Design and Innovation
Health Service Executive