



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

An Oifig Náisiúnta don Chuimsiú  
Sóisialta  
Rannóg Cúram Príomhúil  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse  
Sláinte  
Lána an Mhuilinn  
Baile Phámar  
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National Social Inclusion Office  
Primary Care Division  
Health Service Executive  
Mill Lane  
Palmerstown  
Dublin 20

8<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Ms Mary Ryan  
Dept. of Health  
Hawkins House  
Hawkins St.  
Dublin 2

**Ministerial (briefing) PQ 20612/16**

\* To ask the Minister for Health his views on whether proper protocols were followed in a case (details supplied); and his and the Health Service Executive's plans to amend guidelines and best practice standards to ensure that persons at risk are dealt with promptly.

Dear Mary,

I refer to the above Ministerial (Briefing) Parliamentary Question, for which the HSE has been requested for material for reply. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

While it is the policy of the HSE not to comment on individual cases I can confirm that work has commenced on the circumstances surrounding this case.

In respect to this case, the following standards, guidelines and protocols are relevant.

**National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare:**

Quality and patient safety is the responsibility of all staff and is core to service provision and should be embedded in service delivery throughout primary care services, including addiction services. To this end, the HSE addiction service is also working to implement the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare* (HIQA, 2012).

**Guidelines regarding the provision of opioid substitution treatment:**

Currently services operate from relevant guidelines, such as the UK guidelines 'Drug Misuse and Dependence: UK Guidelines on Clinical Management', the NICE guidelines on Methadone and buprenorphine for the Management of Opioid Dependence, the Eurometh Methadone Guidelines, relevant ICGP Guidelines and the National Drugs Rehabilitation Framework.

As part of these guidelines, the ongoing treatment of an individual involves regular assessment of risk and appropriate responses to any identified risks.

Arising from recommendations in the **Introduction of the Opioid Treatment Protocol** (2010), a **Clinical Guideline for OST** has been drafted by a committee comprising of representatives from the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, HSE Addiction Service Managers, and the HSE National Social Inclusion Office. These are the first national guidelines on OST that specifically relate to treatment in HSE clinics and as well as in primary care settings. These guidelines are in final stages of approval within the HSE.

**National Hospital Discharge Protocol for Homelessness:**

In addition, a National Hospital Discharge Protocol for Homelessness (Guidance Framework) has been approved in line with the HSE Integrated Care Guidance Policy 2014 and the Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness 2014.

The aim of this protocol is to ensure that clear procedures are in place, involving the Health Services, Local Authorities/Homeless Action Teams and the Voluntary Sector, so that all discharges of persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness from acute and mental health care services are planned, with the necessary accommodation and supports in place prior to discharge.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Doyle', written in a cursive style.

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Joseph Doyle  
National Planning Specialist