



28<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Deputy Thomas Gould, TD  
Dáil Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**PQ: 16018/20**

To ask the Minister for Health if increased funding has been provided to drug and alcohol treatment centres in view of the fact that their bed capacity has been significantly reduced in line with public health guidance as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

**PQ: 16019/20**

To ask the Minister for Health if increased funding has been provided to non-HSE drug and alcohol treatment centres in view of the fact that their bed capacity has been significantly reduced in line with public health guidance as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

**PQ: 16020/20**

To ask the Minister for Health if additional bed capacity in drug and alcohol treatment centres will be provided as a result of an increase in alcohol and drug addiction issues due to the lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic

**PQ: 16021/20**

To ask the Minister for Health if a strategic plan will be put in place to assist persons that have developed drug or alcohol addictions or those that have had their drug or alcohol addictions increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Questions which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

Regarding increased funding provided to drug and alcohol treatment. There are three HSE residential drug and alcohol services: St Michaels Ward in Beaumont, Cuan Dara and Keltoi. St Michaels Ward and Cuan Dara remained operational but with reduced bed capacity to facilitate public health guidelines. Keltoi was re-purposed to provide self-isolation facilities for vulnerable groups during the



Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of the re-opening of Keltoi, the HSE is working through a process of resumption of services in a safe manner in line with public health guidelines.

In terms of community and voluntary services in receipt of funding through the HSE, each CHO has been invited to identify section 39 agencies that may be experiencing financial difficulties. The HSE is working through a process of continuation of services in a safe manner in line with public health guidelines. This is a process that is worked through individually with each service through the Service Level Agreement.

For the Deputy's information, the Department of Rural and Community Development is funding the COVID-19 Stability Fund for Community and Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprises for services that are in need of funding to help their organisation through COVID-19. €35m has been made available through the Dormant Accounts Fund. See <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b1a7b9-covid-19-community-voluntary-charity-and-social-enterprise/>

Regarding additional bed capacity in drug and alcohol treatment centres and a strategic plan to assist persons that have developed drug or alcohol addictions: Most Tier 4 residential drug and alcohol treatment services have needed to reduce bed capacity to operate with public health guidelines. It is however important to note that the majority of people who use drugs are most appropriately supported in the community rather than residential setting. From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, drug and alcohol services have made a concerted effort to support people that were accessing services but also to engage people into services. This resulted in the elimination of waiting lists for Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST), the continuation of all people on treatment throughout the crisis and an additional 670 people being inducted onto OST treatment. Contingency planning in the community was key to this response and currently work is ongoing to review what has worked well and can be incorporated into Community based treatment over the coming months and years.

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

Yours sincerely,



---

Joseph Doyle  
National Planning Specialist