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Health Service Executive

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Deputy Thomas P. Broughan
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
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Re PQ 17448/15

* To ask the Minister for Health the services currently available for women only relating to addiction, recovery, community support and drop-in; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Broughan,

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.

Nationally, people who present for addiction treatment are offered a range of interventions namely Initial Assessment, Comprehensive Assessment, Minnesota Programme, Brief Intervention, Individual Counselling, self-help, peer-support etc. or a combination of these. The delivery of these services is based on the Four Tier Model of treatment intervention and services are designed to respond to the individual's specific identified needs.

Interagency working between the HSE, Drug Task Forces and multiple other community, statutory and voluntary agencies form the basis of this delivery as the target is to provide services where possible in a community environment. Counselling and rehabilitation services provide care to those presenting with an addiction through one to one counselling and onward referral to other statutory and voluntary groups where appropriate. The HSE also provides funding to a number of voluntary service providers who treat drug and alcohol addictions.

In general, Rehabilitative pathways include referral to: substance misuse education, harm reduction (where appropriate), brief intervention, therapeutic Intervention, psychology service/referrals, referral to residential treatment and referral to another appropriate support services such as social work and/or child and Mental Health.

For the Deputy's information I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position across the 9 Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) in relation to specific services for women:

Community Health Organisation – Area 1 Covering Donegal, Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan and Cavan/Monaghan

The Donegal Addiction Service provides 1:1 counselling for women.
The service a number of years ago supported the start up of a "Women's AA only group"

in the County and provided the use of the HSE building in this regard and provided support for the women who were chairing / facilitating the meetings. This AA group has now moved to an independent building but still maintains contact with the HSE for support and advice.

Other addiction services are based on equal access and cater for men and women, such as Group therapy, Aftercare, & Relapse groups.

Community Health Organisation – Area 2 Covering Galway, Roscommon and Mayo

There are no female only services provided by the HSE Western Area drugs service.

Community Health Organisation – Area 3 Covering Clare, Limerick, and North Tipperary/East Limerick.

The services offered include one to one counselling, outreach, needle exchange, brief interventions, key working and methadone programmes. Within the overall team, clients can elect to work with a male or female staff member if gender is an issue that impacts on therapeutic work.

The HSE Mid West Drug and Alcohol Service currently fund PALLS Ltd in Limerick in relation to a gender specific, trauma informed response to women in recovery. The programme includes:

- delivery of a low threshold group with Ana Liffey Drugs Project
- delivery of the Helping Women Recover group
- roll out of a programme of activities for women, including alternative therapies, social and cultural activities etc.

Additionally, in 2015 PALLS has been funded to carry out research into the gender specific requirements of women in the region with a view to informing future service developments.

Community Health Organisation – Area 4 Covering Kerry, North Cork, North Lee, South Lee, and West Cork.

In Cork & Kerry CHO there are two treatment services that are exclusively for women. These are Farnanes Detox and Rehabilitation Service (Cuan Mhuire) and Renewal Step Down Service (operated through Tabor Lodge).

Community Health Organisation – Area 5 Covering South Tipperary, Carlow/Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford

All HSE addiction services are open to males and females.

While the area currently has no female only services, Waterford is in process of setting up a pilot recovery group for females.

Community Health Organisation – Areas 6 Covering Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin South East and **Area 7** Covering Kildare/West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, and Dublin South West

The Regional Addiction Services that covers CHO 6 and 7 provides a Drug Liaison Midwife (DLM) service. The Midwife is the Liaison person between the Maternity Hospital and the Addiction Services. The DLM is part of a specialised multidisciplinary team who provide comprehensive care for pregnant drug dependent women. The

multidisciplinary team includes a Consultant Obstetrician, Midwives, social workers, DLM, paediatric services, infectious disease specialists, dietician, and Psychiatric staff.

The main services provided by the DLM are as follows;

- The DLM case manages all pregnant drug dependant/misusing women.
- Supports women throughout their pregnancy and postnatal period.
- Assists in accessing priority drug treatment for pregnant women who are drug using and not in treatment. This includes residential inpatient drug treatment.
- The DLM encourages women to attend for ante-natal and post-natal visits, follow up for family planning post delivery, and working closely with social services around child protection issues in the early postnatal period.
- Educates and encourages women to stop using drugs in pregnancy.

Community Health Organisation – Area 8 Covering Laois/Offaly, Longford/Westmeath, Louth and Meath

Merchants Quay Ireland through the Rehabilitation and Aftercare service run a “Women’s only” stabilisation group every Thursday in Longford and every Friday in Tullamore, Co Offaly for recovering female adult drug users.

The MQI Rehab & Aftercare Worker provides the following to those engaged in the stabilisation group:

- Care planning
- Advice and support
- Encouraging clients into pathways to education/employment,
- Peer support/peer led groups
- Referral as appropriate.

The HSE Addiction Services in the North East (Louth and Meath) has a number of options for women at Tier 3 or community based services, with both the HSE addiction services and community based drugs initiatives open to all. These services provide a mixture of open access or drop-in services as well as structured supports to aid people seeking help around their own recovery. The Tier 3 community services include the HSE drugs and alcohol services across the four counties, as well as the Task Force / HSE funded services, Cavan / Monaghan Drug Awareness, Louth Community Drug & Alcohol Team, Meath Community Drug & Alcohol Response & Turas Counselling Service. These community based drug services also advise women clients of their options around free or low-cost child-care if that is an issue, or schedule appointments to suit them.

Community Health Organisation – Area 9 Covering Dublin North, Dublin North Central and Dublin North West

Services to clients within the Addiction Service in CHO Dublin North City & County are not provided on the basis of gender. Within the Addiction Service there is a Specialist Drug Liaison Midwife in place to make contact with substance misusing women who are pregnant and to liaise between obstetric hospitals and addiction services. The addiction services provide pregnant drug using women a rapid assessment and priority access into treatment. The drug liaison midwife co-ordinates their management and access relevant services.

The Addiction Service in CHO 9 also fund two Projects which provide women specific services as follows:-

1. The SAOL Project

The SAOL Project is a community based programme, based within the North Inner City Drugs Task Force area for women in treatment for drug addiction.

2. Ashleigh House Women's Residential Centre – Part of Coolmine Therapeutic Community

The Ashleigh House is a national residential rehabilitation service is a maximum of six months in duration, for up to 14 women in residence. It provides services to women and their children in a safe environment to address substance misuse issues. The programme also admits women who may be on a low dose of prescribed anti-depressant medication, or for those coming off the last of their methadone under medical supervision, with the view to becoming drug free within weeks of arrival.

Finally the HSE's **National Drug Treatment Centre (NDTC)** whilst not operating a gender specific services, does deliver a broad range of specialist treatment services for women.

These include:

Individual care plans tailored to client needs.

- Psychiatric dual diagnosis assessment, treatment and referral services.
- A walk-in /self- referral assessment service for treatment.
- Immediate access for assessment/treatment service for women under 18 years.
- Representation on the Service Users Forum.

Immediate access for pregnant drug users in conjunction with the Drug Liaison Midwives in their relevant areas. Priority access for pregnant women for admission to Tier 4 units in Cherry Orchard and Beaumont Hospital for stabilisation/detoxification services.

They also deliver a comprehensive range of services through multidisciplinary teams which include medical, nursing, Sexual Health Advisory service, counselling, social work, psychology, outreach, welfare and where required access to play therapy services for their children. Women in treatment at the NDTC are offered a comprehensive range of medical screening services for Hepatitis and HIV and on site treatment services delivered where appropriate in partnership with our colleagues in the acute hospital services.

In addition they deliver a broad range of medical services which include monitoring of INR levels, ECG monitoring and supervision of directly observed therapies such as TB, HIV, anti-coagulants, etc.

The NDTC also works in partnership with colleagues in the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sector to support continuum of care which includes local drug task force projects and rehabilitation services e.g. Coolmine Ashleigh House, Saol Project, Ruhama etc.

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

Yours sincerely,



Joseph Doyle
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Social Inclusion