



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.

T 01 6207304 R: jim.ryan1@hse.ie

Head of Operations, Mental Health Service
St Loman's Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin 20

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Deputy Brid Smith.
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

22nd February 2022

PQ Number: 2741/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if there are plans for the State to provide comprehensive therapy and counselling services given the growing demand during and post-Covid-19 especially for persons who cannot afford to access therapy privately; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that persons on State payments are having to spend up to €100 per week on such services (details supplied); the steps he will take to address this demand; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Details Supplied: *Out of benefits such is their distress and urgent need for intervention, leaving them with little money to live on; will he acknowledge that during and after the pandemic psychological and mental health issues are increasing and resources must be put in place for those not in a position to pay substantial fees for therapy/counselling*

- **Brid Smith**

Dear Deputy Smith,

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.

The range of mental health services delivered by, or on behalf of, the HSE is extensive and covers both specialist and non-specialist (lower level) mental health support. While disrupted during Covid-19, comprehensive therapy and counselling services have remained operational and accessible.

Mental health promotion and information

At a general population level, mental health promotion, self-help and information services have been particularly important during Covid-19. The HSE continues to deliver trusted mental health information through our own channels and in partnership with others. For example;

- Information about mental health and available supports and services can be found on the HSE website yourmentalhealth.ie or by calling the YourMentalHealth Information Line on 1800 111 888.
- In response to Covid-19, a range of new content on minding your mental health was created in March 2020 for yourmentalhealth.ie to provide reassurance to the general population and to highlight the available supports and services.



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- An ongoing campaign promotes yourmentalhealth.ie and YourMentalHealth Information Line on radio (National, Regional and Digital radio) online and through social media. This continued throughout 2021.
- For young people, the HSE continues to work with **SpunOut.ie** to provide engaging online mental health content and signposting and the site has been performing extremely well.

Self-help

In addition to information resources and self-help options, more formalised, person-centred services (for those with more mild to moderate difficulties) are also be delivered by HSE-funded agencies, and through GP and Primary Care services. Services provided by NGO partners (for the general public, or specific targeted groups) include counselling, day programmes, peer support, telephone helplines, online or SMS support and advocacy services.

HSE online self-help resources include the 'Minding Your Wellbeing' programme and 'Stress Control'.

Person to person support

With support from both the HSE and Sláintecare, MyMind have been delivering an average of >1,000 free online counselling sessions per month.

The HSE fund the **Text50808 service** provides emotional support to anyone experiencing a crisis through engagement in a text message 'conversation' with a trained and supervised volunteer.

Community-based and primary care mental health supports for adults

The HSE provides ongoing funding to **Aware** to support adults with depression and mood related conditions by offering free evidence-based programmes based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in their local communities.

Since April 2021, therapist-supported online CBT programmes addressing depression and anxiety have been available via referral to SilverCloud from GPs, Primary Care Psychology, National Counselling Service and Jigsaw.

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) incorporates the Counselling in Primary Care Service, counselling for adults who have experienced childhood abuse and counselling for former residents of Mother and Baby Home institutions. It provides a professional, confidential, counselling and psychotherapy service in all HSE CHO areas and operates from over 240 locations nationwide. The NCS is available free of charge across the country to residents in the Republic of Ireland.

CIPC provides time limited counselling to adult GMS cardholders with mild to moderate psychological difficulties. Referral to CIPC is through GP or member of the local primary care team. Further information can be found here:



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<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/counsellingpc/>

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Ryan".

Jim Ryan
Assistant National Director - Head of Operations
National Mental Health Services