



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

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16<sup>th</sup> April 2021,  
Deputy Emer Higgins,  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

PQ  
Number: 16571/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will implement a public health campaign on caring for mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic. -Emer Higgins

PQ  
Number: 16569/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the current public health information campaigns available on accessing mental health support. -Emer Higgins

PQ  
Number: 16570/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will implement a public health campaign on accessing suitable therapy services for mental health treatment. -Emer Higgins

Dear Deputy Higgins,

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.

#### Keep Well Resilience campaign

- The most recent phase of the Healthy Ireland national communications campaign, **“Keep Well”**, was launched in October 2020. The campaign aims to support our citizens through the recent difficult months and during the months ahead.
- Significant funds have been invested in this campaign, with **€7m** Sláintecare funding supporting the delivery of a range of initiatives and support services, which are now being rolled out.
- The campaign encourages us all to do something that is good for us each day or week, like going for a walk within the Covid guidelines, connecting safely with friends or family, engaging in a hobby, or



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reaching out for the supports that we may need. By doing so, we will create balance, routine, and resilience.

- The Keep Well campaign was developed and is being implemented through the Sláintecare Office and by Healthy Ireland, in collaboration with other Units in the Department of Health, other relevant Government Departments, the HSE, Local Authorities, the LGMA, CYPSCs, Sport Ireland, Creative Ireland, and a broad range of national and local community partners.

The campaign is focused on five main themes. These are:

- **Keeping active** and being outdoors. Physical activity can be really helpful in improving mood and reducing anxiety, in addition to keeping us all fit and healthy.

Sport Ireland is leading a series of initiatives to support us to keep active and to exercise within our own local areas throughout these months (and within the Covid guidelines). In addition, sporting organisations and clubs have developed ways to support local communities.

- **Staying connected** with people, as addressing isolation, supporting volunteerism and initiatives that support person-to-person connection is important to our wellbeing and help resilience.
- The Community Call service, which aimed to provide supports to vulnerable groups, was launched last year. This was expanded under the Keep Well campaign, with Local Authorities supported to provide a local community helpline and befriending service.
- Working with partner organisations, including An Garda Síochána, NGOs and Volunteer Ireland, there is a particular emphasis on identifying and supporting those most at risk of isolation.
- **Switching off and being creative** or learning something new, getting back to nature and finding ways to relax can also be really beneficial for general wellbeing. An example of this is The Design and Craft Council of Ireland's recently launched range of initiatives involving craftspeople and makers across the country as part of a nationwide campaign.
- Local Authorities and libraries, with involvement from Creative Ireland, and working with partners at national and local level, are providing a range of initiatives to support individual and community creativity in the arts, music, crafting, culture and reading.
- **Eating well.** By nourishing our bodies and minds, we can develop a better connection between the food we eat and how we feel and positively impact our physical and mental wellbeing.



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- The Grow It Forward 2021 initiative, in partnership with Healthy Ireland and Libraries Ireland, is designed to help the nation's wellbeing by inspiring and supporting people to grow some of their own food and plants at home while connecting with friends and family to join them.
- Through this initiative, 50,000 seed packs will be given away, and participants asked to use the kits to share the experience with ten people, enabling half a million people across Ireland to enjoy the wide range of benefits that come from growing food at home.
- **Minding your mood.** Under this theme, people are being equipped with information on where to go if they need support. This will also be linked with the local community helpline to ensure that people can access the help they need.

The HSE have launched a series of "Minding Your Wellbeing" online videos, which provides an opportunity for people to learn more about key elements of mental wellbeing such as mindfulness, gratitude, self-care and resilience.

In addition, HSE funded NGO's continue to advertise additional services online such as Jigsaw, MyMind and Text 50808. These services offer free counselling and supervised texting services and supports for individuals seeking support apart from the health and wellbeing initiatives described above.

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

Yours sincerely,

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Thomas O'Brien  
General Manager Mental Health Services