



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

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Deputy Jim O'Callaghan
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
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23rd February 2024

PQ Number: 55290/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the main initiatives he has taken to develop and expand mental health services since 27 June 2020; the additional funding provided in successive budgets; his plans for 2024; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jim O'Callaghan

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan

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 main initiatives undertaken to develop and expand mental health services since June 2020 have been guided by the *Sharing the Vision* policy which was launched at that time. It is important to note that service developments and improvements have been undertaken across a number of healthcare areas and indeed across the public sector more broadly to support the improvement of mental health at a population level.

Since 2020, the Department of Health and the HSE have established the required *Sharing the Vision* implementation structures, developed the first three-year implementation plan and put in place a monitoring and reporting framework through which quarterly policy implementation status reports are published online. In addition to progress on specific policy recommendations, these achievements provide a strong foundation for the effective implementation of *Sharing the Vision* up until 2030. Continued investment in new service developments through annual budgetary processes align with *Sharing the Vision* (StV) priorities. An additional €14m has been made available in 2023 to enhance and build new mental health services, bringing the overall mental health budget to €1,227m.

Specifically, there have been key developments and important service improvements across all four domains in the policy as set out briefly below:

Domain 1 Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention

- Publication of ['Embedding Women's Mental Health in Sharing the Vision'](#) and the development of a position paper for how the Women's Mental Health Charter will be embedded in StV implementation.
- Development of new public mental health content on yourmentalhealth.ie and the launch of the 'Making the Connections' public information campaign, which focuses on mental health literacy and signposts people to new content on anxiety, low mood, stress and sleep issues.



- Development and publication of [‘Stronger Together – HSEs mental health promotion plan 2022 – 2027’](#), supported by the establishment of a national network for health promotion and improvement officers working in mental health.
- [Directories of Wellbeing Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) and the Catalogues of Resources](#) for wellbeing promotion, for schools and centres of education, have been updated and published online.

Domain 2 Service Access, Coordination and Continuity of Care

- Further roll-out of [social prescribing](#) nationally as an effective means of linking those with mental health difficulties to community-based supports and interventions. This has been supported by training and learning platforms for social prescribing link workers and HSE staff involved in supporting the delivery of social prescribing.
- Enhanced access to talk therapies within community and primary care settings, including by targeted initiatives to address capacity challenges in [Counselling in Primary Care](#) and Primary Care Psychology Services.
- An assessment protocol for autism in community settings was piloted in two CHO areas and concluded with positive evaluation findings
- An audit has been completed on the provision of appropriate environments for those presenting at emergency departments who additionally require an emergency mental health assessment
- Continued investment in the provision of digital mental health services including guided online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) programmes in collaboration with SilverCloud. Since its roll out in 2021, this programme has seen over 15,000 accounts activated to date with reliable improvements in depression and anxiety symptoms reported.
- Launch of the [Model of Care for Crisis Resolution Services](#) and development of Standard Operating Procedures to support CHO implementation teams, Crisis Resolution Teams and Crisis Café (Solace Café) staff. Four Crisis Resolution Teams sites are now operational (CHO 1, CHO 4, CHO 5 and CHO 6) with a fourth site due to operationalise Quarter 4, 2023. A Solace Café is now operational in CHO 4 and due to launch in Quarter 4, 2023.
- In September 2023, the [Model of Care for CAMHS Hubs](#) was launched with pilots with pilots now underway in CHOs 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8. These hubs will provide enhanced intensive brief mental health interventions to support CAMHS teams in delivering enhanced responses to children, young people and their families and carers, in times of acute mental health crisis.
- In collaboration with the HSEs Internal National Audit, an audit of compliance with the Mental Health Commission Code of Practice Relating to Admission of Children under the Mental Health Act 2001 was completed and the assessment of compliance was ‘satisfactory’.
- Enhancement of Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) across all age groups, including an approximate additional 28 WTEs in Mental Health Services for Older Persons (MHSOP) CMHTs, 54.5 WTEs in General Adult CMHTs and 52 WTEs in CAMHS CMHTs from December 2020 to September 2023.
- A demonstration of the [Model of Care for adults accessing talk therapies while attending specialist mental health services](#) is underway across five demonstration sites.
- The National Clinical Programmes in Mental Health have been expanded as outlined below:

Adult ADHD

- In line with the [Model of Care for ADHD in adults](#), there are ongoing recruitment efforts to staff the recommended multi-disciplinary teams. As of September 2023, there are 5 teams operational of which two are half teams
- Launch of an Adult ADHD app
- Development of Understanding and Managing Adult ADHD Programme (UMAAP).



Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP)

- Building on the [Model of Care for Early Intervention in Psychosis](#) five teams have now been established.
- An EIP key worker grade has been established and approval granted by the DoH. The EIP key worker will enhance the multidisciplinary teams delivering EIP services.

Dual Diagnosis

- Launch of the [Model of Care for Dual Diagnosis](#)
- Base locations for three initial sites have been identified and recruitment of teams is underway with 13 WTE posts filled as of December 2023.

Eating Disorders

- Following the [Model of Care for Eating Disorders](#), ten multi-disciplinary teams are now operational (5 Adult and 5 CAMHS)

Management of Self Harm and Suicide Related Ideation

- Up-date completed of the [National Clinical Programme](#)
- Recruitment of 23 Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse (SCAN) posts since 2022
- Audit of Emergency Department spaces completed

Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People

- In line with the [Model of Care for Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People](#) work has progressed on the establishment of comprehensive specialist MHSOP where none currently exist, building on the establishment and evaluation of four demonstration sites (CHOs 1, 6, 7 and 8).

Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services

- A new National Clinical Lead for specialist perinatal mental health services was appointed in December 2022
- Building on the [Model of Care for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services](#), six multidisciplinary teams are now in place across the hub sites and there are perinatal mental health midwife posts funded in all 13 spoke sites.
- Consultations are continuing in order to advance the establishment of a Mother and Baby Unit within Elm Mount Unit and funding has been approved for the appraisal of suitability. It is expected that the process of tendering for and completion of appraisal should occur in Q1 2024.

Mental Health of Intellectual Disability (MHID)

- Following the [National Model of Service](#), there are now 19 adult teams and 4 CAMHS-ID teams in place with 44.65 new multidisciplinary posts appointed since 2021.
- Launch of the [Mental Health Engagement and Recovery Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026](#) and continued development of peer support working, recovery education and individual placement and support services

Domain 3 Social Inclusion

- Publication of the new [National Housing Strategy for Disabled People \(NHSDP\) 2022-2027](#) and of the associated [implementation plan](#). Data from local authorities indicates that in 2022, 2,472 disabled households were allocated social housing and of these 695 (28%) were households who had indicated that their housing need was related to mental health.
- A Standard Operating Procedure for the Individual Personalised Support model of supported employment is at an advanced draft stage.



- A [Green Paper on Disability Reform – A Public Consultation to Reform Disability Payments in Ireland](#) was published September, 2023, which aims to simplify and make the social welfare system work better for people with disabilities.

Domain 4 Accountability and Continuous Improvement.

- Publication of the [National Population Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research and Evaluation Strategy](#), supported by the Health Research Board (HRB), and with allocation of €1.8m for research and evaluation under StV over 2022 and 2023.
- Establishment of the HSE Assisted Decision Making (ADM) mentorship programme with 46 mentors and over 500 mentees across CHO areas and hospital groups, which include experienced staff working in mental health services.
- In order to enable the HSE to build its change management capacity and to adopt a programmatic approach to the delivery of change, a dedicated Community Health Operations Improvement and Change (CHOIC) function has been established. CHOIC currently supports a portfolio of service improvement projects within mental health services, as well as across other service areas within community healthcare.

In 2024, work will continue to progress the short-term recommendations in *Sharing the Vision* and regular progress reports will be published online. During 2024, the second policy implementation plan will be developed, coming into effect from the start of 2025.

Funding: Funding budgets in relation to successive budgets.

The NSP 2024 funding is indicative only as the NSP for 2024 has not yet been signed off.

Net Mental Health Funding 2020 to 2024						
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total increase
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Budget per NSP (excluding Covid)	1,031	1,099	1,159	1,227	1,308	277
PFG development funding	13	23	24	14	3	77
	Budget increase 2020 - 2024:					
	Public sector pay agreements					119
	Existing level of service funding					66
	Development funding					77
	Other adjustments					15
	Total budget increase					277



Allocation of Programme for Government Funding 2020 to 2024

Funding Use	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
In Patient Capacity/Placements		7.7	5.0	3.0		15.7
Forensic Service	13.0		1.0			14.0
S39 developments				9.0		9.0
Expanding community services		3.5	4.0			7.5
CAMH's hubs		5.0	0.6			5.6
Expansion CAMHS services			2.0		3.0	5.0
Crisis resolution services		2.6	1.4			4.0
Rental/Upgrade costs			2.0	2.0		4.0
Advancing Recovery & Service User Engagement		0.9	2.3			3.2
Clinical Programs - Dual Diagnosis		1.0	0.8			1.8
Clinical Programs - Eating Disorders			1.2			1.2
Clinical Programs - ADHD			1.1			1.1
Clinical Programs - Early Intervention in Psychosis		0.5	0.5			1.0
Sharing the Vision implementation		0.5	0.3			0.8
Peer support workers & CHO service user engagement leads		0.3	0.4			0.7
Clonmel Crisis house		0.4	0.4			0.7
MoC Specialist MH Services for Older People			0.6			0.6
Genio & Misc		0.3	0.2			0.5
Clinical Programs - Self Harm			0.3			0.3
MHID		0.3				0.3
National Office for Suicide Prevention & CFL		0.1				0.1
Total	13.0	23.0	24.0	14.0	3.0	77.0

Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide, 2015-2024

The HSE works to lead on the implementation of [Connecting for Life](#), since 2015. The strategy outlines 69 key actions, across seven strategic goals and related work across these actions, is described in phased [implementation plans](#). The [HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention \(NOSP\)](#) has responsibility for developing these plans and for describing the strategic and operational agenda needed to drive the implementation of the strategy.

Progress in implementing Connecting for Life is tracked and reported quarterly, to the National Cross Sectoral Steering and Implementation Group associated with the strategy. Its role is to review and drive implementation, applying a cross-sectoral approach and supporting the wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies that have commitments to particular actions or initiatives in the strategy.

More details can be found in [Quarterly Connecting for Life implementation progress reports](#)

To support this work, the budget and expenditure of the HSE NOSP has increased significantly in the last ten years, from €5.19m in 2012 to €14m currently.

- The HSE NOSP supports the NGO sector, providing significant funding to 21 national organisations and frontline services working in the area of suicide prevention and mental health promotion. In 2022, HSE NOSP grants to these organisations totalled €7.065m, although additional grants are allocated to more local agencies, via CHOs. The nationally funded NGOs are: Aware; Belong To Youth Services; spunout; Dublin Simon Community; Exchange House Ireland National Traveller Mental Health Service; First Fortnight; GAA Healthy Clubs; HUGG (Healing



Untold Grief Groups); ISPC (Childline); LGBT Ireland; Men's Health Forum Ireland (MHFI); My Mind; The National Family Resource Centre (FRC) Mental Health Promotion Project; National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF); Pieta; Samaritans; Shine (See Change, Headline); Suicide or Survive (SOS); Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI); Turn2Me, and; the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

- HSE support of the NGO sector facilitates a wide range of front-line support options for people nationally. For example in 2022: Pieta provided almost 44,000 suicide intervention counselling appointments; Samaritans handled almost 400,000 helpline calls and emails; Turn2Me provided over 4,500 adult counselling appointments; My Mind provided over 42,000 counselling appointments, and; Aware delivered 76 Life Skills Programmes, for over 1,100 participants. Further details on activity from funded-NGOs can be found in [HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention \(NOSP\) Annual Reports 2005 - 2022](#).
- The HSE NOSP provides a wide range of [education and training initiatives](#) encompassing suicide and self-harm prevention, and suicide bereavement. These have been identified as key components of work to achieve the vision of Connecting for Life. Gatekeeper training in suicide prevention is available to anyone over the age of 18 years in Ireland, free of charge. In 2022, over 11,000 participants benefitted from training including Livingworks START, safeTALK, ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), STORM®, Suicide Bereavement Professionals Workshop and, Understanding Self-harm.
- The HSE NOSP resources the delivery of the national HSE Mental Health Literacy Campaign, and is a primary funder of campaign activity. In recent years, the Campaign Team (led by HSE Mental Health Operations) has had a priority focus on improving the digital offering across the HSE Mental Health website www.yourmentalhealth.ie - to provide appropriate and accessible information and signposts to support services, for people visiting who have common mental health difficulties or for people who support others. More details can be found in the [HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention \(NOSP\) Annual Report 2022](#).
- The HSE provides a national network of 21 [Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention \(ROSPs\)](#), who coordinate the development, and support the current implementation of 10 regional Connecting for Life Suicide Prevention action plans. HSE ROSPs work across a range of Community Health Services, CHOs and areas nationwide to assist all relevant services and stakeholders in implementing the relevant actions of each plan. They are supported in their work by the HSE NOSP to ensure that each local action plan is evidence based and in line with national programme goals and performance metrics.

Additional developments and initiatives of note in recent years are listed.

- In 2022 the HSE NOSP published the [Irish Probable Suicide Deaths Study \(IPSDS\)](#). The IPSDS is the result of a collaboration since 2016, between the HSE NOSP, the Coroners Service and the Health Research Board (HRB), with support from the Department of Health.
- The HSE NOSP resources the HSE [National Clinical programme for Self-Harm and Suicide-related Ideation](#) (NCPSHI), first introduced to acute hospital emergency department settings in 2016. Between January 2018 and June 2022, NCPSHI clinicians assessed 54,807 presentations due to self-harm or suicide-related ideation.
- [AfterWords: A survey of people bereaved by suicide in Ireland](#) - funded by the HSE NOSP as part of the Collaborative Research Grant Scheme 2021/2022, this first-of-its-kind survey in Ireland was undertaken by the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF), in collaboration with the suicide bereavement organisation HUGG (Healing Untold Grief Groups).



- A proposed data sharing protocol with An Garda Síochána – of daily records of suspected suicides from their Pulse system – is currently at final stages of development.
- In 2021 the HSE NOSP introduced its first [Grant Scheme for Collaborative Research projects](#), to support projects focused on improving the evidence base for mental health and suicide prevention on priority groups in Ireland. The scheme also aimed to promote and support collaborative research projects between researchers and services working in the area of suicide prevention in Ireland.
- Work to prevent paracetamol-related intentional drug overdose in Ireland has progressed to deliver a [new information campaign](#), promoting the safe sales of paracetamol products in both pharmacy retail, and non-pharmacy retail settings.
- With the support of the HSE NOSP and Healthy Ireland, the Health Promotion Research Centre in National University of Ireland Galway published research on [Mental Health Promotion Interventions and Supports Provided by Voluntary Organisations to Workplaces](#).
- In 2022 the HSE NOSP – in conjunction with researchers from NUI Galway and the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) – commenced a HRB-funded research project titled ‘Informing Youth Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion through Secondary Analysis of the [Planet Youth](#) Datasets (Inform - YSP)’.
- Since 2021, the inclusion of questions on suicide in the annual [Healthy Ireland Survey](#) was a result of a close working relationship between the HSE NOSP and Healthy Ireland. The HSE NOSP produced a business case for, and worked with Healthy Ireland to develop survey questions for this module. 2021 was the first year a module on suicide prevention was included in this national survey.
- The National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) is an independent, multi-disciplinary research unit that delivers research projects in suicide, self-harm and mental health. Funding from the HSE NOSP ensures these projects can contribute to the surveillance, research, implementation, evaluation and the evidence base for strategic goals and actions of Connecting for Life. Most notably, the HSE NOSP funds the [National Self-Harm Registry Ireland \(NSHRI\)](#), which is operated by the NSRF. It is the world’s first national registry of cases of intentional self-harm presenting to hospital emergency departments.

In recent years the HSE NOSP has worked to improve suicide bereavement (postvention) supports in Ireland, including the appointment of a National Suicide Bereavement Support Coordinator, investment in the national [Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service](#), and resourcing new and improved campaigns and online information related to bereavement and loss (hse.ie/grief).

This is a detailed response relating to mental health **initiatives** since June 2020 and plans for the coming 2024 and additional funding provided in successive budget.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services