



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta  
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,  
Baile Átha Cliath 20, D20 HK69

Office of the  
Assistant National Director  
Mental Health Operations

St Lomans Hospital, Palmerstown,  
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Deputy Verona Murphy.  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

27<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**PQ Number: 47458/23**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if, in light of the considerable pressures on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, he will agree to increase the supports available for parents and guardians of children and teens to access parenting support programmes that are directly addressed at assisting parents and guardians to assist and support their children dealing with mental health issues; the extent of funding that he is prepared to commit to such an initiative over the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Verona Murphy**

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Dear Deputy Murphy,

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.

It can be an overwhelming experience for a parent or guardian when their child is experiencing difficulties with their mental health. The reality of caring for or supporting children with mental health difficulties can be complex and demanding as each parent or guardians' experience of caring or supporting their child is likely to be different. Parents and guardians play a vital support role for children or young persons with mental illness and they can experience major personal impacts as a result. That is why self-care is so important for carers or supporters and why they too need support. Having the parent/guardian involved in the recovery process ensures better recovery outcomes and places an emphasis on the family members as having a role in the recovery journey of the child or young person that they care for.

#### **Available Supports**

There are many supports available to parents/guardians of children dealing with mental health issues. The most appropriate service or organisation depends on what the child or young person is going through and if the mental health issue is considered mild, moderate or more severe in nature.

#### **HSE Supports**

##### **Your Mental Health Website**

Information and advice about mental health and wellbeing including information on:

- types of mental health services and supports and how to access them
- self help guides, tools and activities to support and improve mental health



- advice on how to support someone experiencing a mental health difficulty, issue or condition

Further information can be found here: [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)

### **HSE Primary Care Psychology Services**

Primary Care Psychology services exist within community-based primary care centres located all over Ireland. They provide a broad range of services to children aged 0 to 17 years of age. Each primary care centre usually has a team of occupational therapists, psychologists, nurses and social workers. The aim of the psychology services is to support the psychological wellbeing of people in the local area. They can provide mental health interventions to young people with mild to moderate mental health concerns, and their parents. This includes individual therapy, group-based therapeutic work for children, adolescents and parents, and various types of assessments. The primary care centre may also offer parenting groups and informational talks where they help direct parents to useful resources. Any healthcare professional can refer to the **HSE's Primary Care Psychology Services**. Parents can also use the referral form, available at any primary care health centre or they can make direct enquiries at the local primary care office.

### **Specialist CAMHS Services**

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, CAMHS, provide specialist mental health services to young people up to 18 years, who have a moderate to severe mental disorder that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health team. A child is referred to CAMHS by the GP when treatment at primary care level has been unsuccessful, and/or the mental health issue is so severe and complex it requires specialist services. The assessments and interventions provided by CAMHS are carried out in partnership with the child/young person and their parents/guardians. Treatment includes: intensive community-based care, talking therapy, group therapy, medication, and specialist treatments. CAMHS provide advice, information and support to parents/guardians which assists them to positively support children and young persons at home.

### **Non-profit organisations**

The HSE also funds a number of organisations to provide support services for children dealing with mental health issues and their parents. These include:

#### **Aware**

Aware offers support services for adults aged 18 and over, including adults who may be supporting a child with a mood related condition and are looking for understanding, information or signposting. Aware also provides a range of education services to include positive mental health programmes which are delivered to adults and senior cycle students at secondary schools nationwide. The free support line operates from 10.00am to 10.00pm. Full details of all services are available on their website.

**Website:** [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)

**Email:** [wecanhelp@aware.ie](mailto:wecanhelp@aware.ie)

#### **Barnardos**

**Barnardos Ireland** is a service for young people up to the age of 18 years. They also provide individual counselling, family support and bereavement services operating around the country.

#### **Bodywhys**

Bodywhys is the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland. They offer **online support groups** for young people age 13 – 18. They also offer information for parents on **treatment pathways in the public**



**health system** for eating disorders. A four-week support **programme for families and parents** of those affected by an eating disorder is also provided. The local helpline runs seven days per week.

**Website:** [www.bodywhys.ie](http://www.bodywhys.ie)

**Email:** [info@bodywhys.ie](mailto:info@bodywhys.ie)

**Helpline:** seven days a week: 1890 20 04 44

### **Family Carers Ireland**

Ireland's national voluntary organisation for family carers in the home.

**Website:** [www.carersireland.com](http://www.carersireland.com)

**Email:** [info@carersireland.com](mailto:info@carersireland.com)

**Tel:** 1800 240724

### **Jigsaw**

The Jigsaw Support Line is available for free mental health support and advice to young people aged 12 - 25 years old, and parents or concerned adults

- Freephone 1800 544729 (from 1pm to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Text CALL ME to 086 180 3880, giving your preferred day and time for a call (from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Email [help@jigsaw.ie](mailto:help@jigsaw.ie) (for responses from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Visit [www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie) or [www.jigsawonline.ie](http://www.jigsawonline.ie) for more information

### **Shine**

Shine (formerly Schizophrenia Ireland) provides support, advocacy services and counselling services for people affected by mental health difficulties. This includes family and friends. The information line provides general information, a listening ear and specific information about Shine services.

**Website:** [www.shine.ie](http://www.shine.ie)

### **TURN2ME**

[TURN2ME](http://www.turn2me.ie) provides a three-tiered approach to supporting mental wellbeing - self-help, support groups and professional support. Online services include counselling and support groups

### **Other Organisations**

#### **Parents Plus**

Parents Plus Empowering Professionals to Support Families is an Irish charity that develops evidence-based, practical, parenting courses and mental health programmes. Their mission is to improve the well-being of children and families through training. There are eight different Parents Plus Programmes for parents and young people, which are usually run as 6-12 week courses. The parenting courses are largely run free of charge or at a minimal cost to those attending.

#### **Family Resource Centres**

There are 109 Family Resource Centres in communities around the country run by the **Child and Family Agency Tusla**. They deliver community-based supports to children and families in disadvantaged areas, and some services have access to a visiting psychotherapist.

Other useful resources to assist parents and guardians support their children dealing with mental health issues include:

'Journey Together' is a guide for families and friends. It has advice on how to help people with mental health problems. Please see links below:

<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/mental-health-family-carer-and-supporter-guide.pdf>



<https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/services-support/supports-for-carers-family-and-friends/>

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Braham', written over a light grey rectangular background.

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**Paul Braham**  
**Senior Operations Manager (Area DON)**  
**National Mental Health Services**