



03/03/2026

Deputy Nolan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 7546/26 To ask the Minister for Health the proactive initiatives she is developing to link mental health services with school-based drug prevention efforts; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Nolan,

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.

Drug prevention in schools is delivered under the Department of Education and Youth's Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice, which mandates a whole-school approach to promoting wellbeing in schools across the key areas of culture, relationships, curriculum, and policy and planning. To support its implementation, the HSE has co-developed resources for Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in partnership with the Department of Education, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). In addition, 'Know the Score' is an evidence-based substance use prevention education programme which is implemented in Senior Cycle, and was jointly developed between the HSE, the Department of Education, and Drug and Alcohol Task Forces.

These resources signpost students to a range of mental health services and supports, including [Navigator, a new digital signposting tool](#) to support the mental health of young people, which was launched in June 2025. Developed in collaboration with Spunout, and co-designed with young people, this innovative tool offers anonymous, immediate and personalised mental health information, and supports. Since its launch, Navigator has seen 17,843 sessions, from 15,795 new users.

In order to support implementation of these resources in schools, the HSE and the Department of Education and Youth provide teacher professional learning, reaching approximately 1,000 teachers each year including training on 'Know the Score', skills for facilitating SPHE, and new training in mental health and emotional wellbeing education, developed with NEPS and NCCA.

Under Sharing the Vision, Ireland's national mental health policy, work is also underway to strengthen the pathways between schools and a range of support services for children and young people. Recommendation 10 under Sharing the Vision is the development of a protocol between the Department of Education and the HSE on the liaison process between primary / post-primary schools, mental health services, and supports such as NEPS, general practitioners (GPs), primary care services, and specialist mental health services. This protocol has been drafted and will be operationalised alongside the Single Point of Access (SPoA) model currently being rolled out by the

HSE's Child and Youth Mental Health Office. The Single Point of Access (SPoA) model is a key commitment in the 3 year Action Plan published by the HSE's Child and Youth Mental Health Office in February 2025. This will involve a single integrated pathway to mental health services and a streamlined referrals process, so that young people and their parents will have access to support and services when they need it. Once the SPoA model is finalised, the protocol will be agreed and implemented.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Aisling Sheehan
National Lead HSE Alcohol and Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes, Health and Wellbeing