

CORRESPONDENCE

**MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN
DISTRICT OF LIMERICK**

SEPTEMBER, 2019

- Letter received on 21st June, 2019 from the Office of the Minister for Education and Skills in reply to Notice of Motion from Members calling on the Minister for Health to implement an evidence based mental health awareness programme in all Limerick City secondary schools.
- Letters received on 12th and 16th August, 2019 from the Office of the Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform in reply to Notice of Motion from Members calling on the Minister to review the use of election posters in the interest of reducing the use of single use plastics while protecting the integrity of the democratic process.



Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

Mr. James Clune
Meetings Administrator
Corporate Services
Limerick City and County Council
Corporate Headquarters
Merchants Quay
Limerick

PLEASE QUOTE REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE.

Our Ref: DES-CU-01718-2019

18th June 2019



Dear Mr. Clune,

I refer to your recent correspondence referred to the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Joe McHugh TD, from the office of the Mr. Jim Daly TD, Minister for Mental Health and Older People, in relation to the implementation of an evidence based mental health awareness programme for Limerick Schools.

The Department's ambition is that the promotion of wellbeing and positive mental health will be at the core of the ethos of every school in Ireland. To this end the Department's **Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023** aims to ensure that the experience of children and young people from the early years, throughout their primary and post-primary education will be one that enhances, promotes, values and nurtures their wellbeing.

The Department of Education and Skills is aware of the challenges our young people face and recognises that schools play a significant role in the development of resilience skills and wellbeing. The Department adopts a holistic, integrated approach to supporting the work of schools in promoting positive mental health and in supporting those with a broad range of problems, including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

This broad reaching approach spans the curriculum in schools, whole-school ethos, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, student support, pastoral care, and the provision of professional development for teachers.

When developing policy and practice in the area of Wellbeing, schools choose approaches and programmes which meet the specific needs of their own context and their curricular needs in the area of Wellbeing and SPHE. To support schools when selecting programmes, the Department has provided advice, in the form of a circular, Circular 0043/18, which sets out a broad framework of criteria and a checklist for schools to use when considering the suitability of programmes to meet their needs, within their own individual contexts.



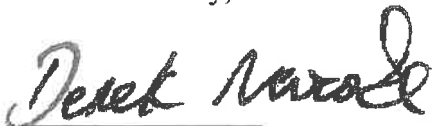
As you will appreciate, there are an extensive number of agencies, voluntary groups and individuals offering a very wide range of interventions, presentations and programmes to schools and the Department of Education is not in a position to evaluate and monitor each of them individually.

The Department's National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides training in the FRIENDS Programmes which reduce anxiety and promote coping and resilience in children and young people in both primary and post primary schools. The programmes are based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), the recommended first line treatment for anxiety and depression. There is a broad international and national evidence base for the effectiveness of these programmes. Under the Action Plan for Education NEPS are prioritising the needs of DEIS schools throughout the country and providing training to schools in these programmes.

In relation to provision of support by the HSE, the Council may also be aware of the *MindOut* Programme which is a mental health awareness programme for schools, developed by the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway and the HSE's Health Promotion and Improvement Department.

I trust the above provides the Council with an overview of the direction, advice and support the Department of Education and Skills gives to schools in the promotion of positive mental health for all our children and young people and to which the Department affords great importance.

Yours sincerely,



Derek Newcombe
Private Secretary

**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government



Aire Stáit do Rialtas Áitiúil agus Athchóiriú Toghchán
Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform

Ref: HPI.G-MoSP-00432-2019

9 August 2019

Mr. Thomas O'Callaghan
Meetings Administrator
Limerick City & County Council
Corporate Headquarters
Merchants Quay
Limerick
V94 EH90



Dear Mr. O'Callaghan

I have been asked by Mr. John Paul Phelan, T.D. Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform, to acknowledge receipt of your recent letter in relation to use of election posters in the interest of reducing the use of single use plastics.

Your correspondence is receiving attention and a further reply will issue as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Aisling Glynn
Private Secretary

Please note: the Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 (details available on www.lobbying.ie)

**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government



Aire Stáit do Rialtas Áitiúil agus Athchóiriú Toghchán
Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform

Ref: HPLG-MoSP-00432-2019

14 August 2019

Mr Thomas O'Callaghan
Meetings Administrator
Limerick City & County Council
Corporate Headquarters
Merchants Quay
Limerick



Dear Mr O'Callaghan

I have been asked by Mr John Paul Phelan T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Electoral Reform to refer further to an agreed motion by the Metropolitan District of Limerick to reduce the use of single use plastics in election posters.

Election and referendum posters are regulated by law under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended) and by electoral law. Electoral law provides that every notice, bill, poster or similar document having reference to a Dáil, Presidential or European election or to a referendum shall bear upon its face the name and address of the printer and publisher thereof. Failure to comply with this provision is an offence. The Electoral Acts do not regulate the content of electoral material, including election posters, either during or outside of electoral campaigns.

The Litter Pollution Act (section 19(7)) provides that election or referendum posters may be erected/exhibited for a specified time period prior to and after a polling date. Failure to comply with this provision is also an offence. This legislation ensures that posters are only displayed for a finite and reasonable period.

There is no requirement in law that posters at an election or referendum must be erected. It is open to political parties, candidates or other groups to decide whether or not to do so. There is also no requirement in law that posters must be made of plastic or have a plastic component. Again it is open to political parties, candidates or other groups to decide whether or not to use plastic materials or recycled materials in their posters.

While electoral law is subject to ongoing review, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has no plans in the short term to revise the legislation with regard to the physical composition of election posters or to the erection of election posters.

Yours sincerely

Aisling Glynn
Private Secretary

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