



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 12 December 2019**

### **Information on access to mental health services**

In October 2019 the *Finnish Immigration Service* states that:

“The facilities in Afghanistan are not so good. There is only one mental health institution in Kabul, which is governmental. In the other places people have to pay for mental health care” (Finnish Immigration Service (15 October 2019) *Afghanistan: Fact-Finding Mission to Kabul in April 2019 - Situation of Returnees in Kabul*, p.14).

In October 2019 *Human Rights Watch* states that:

“More than half the Afghan population, including many survivors of conflict-related violence, struggle with depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, but fewer than 10 percent receive adequate psychosocial support from the state, according to government documents” (Human Rights Watch (7 October 2019) *Afghanistan: Little Help for Conflict-Linked Trauma*, p.1).

This document also states that:

“With large parts of the country facing armed conflict, a weak health system, and a lack of professional health and social workers, mental health services are largely failing to meet the population’s needs. People in rural areas, about 75 percent of the population, are particularly affected” (ibid, p.1).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

“Afghans who experience mental health and psychosocial conditions face a variety of hurdles to obtain services. The 2019-2023 National Mental Health Strategy says that fewer than 10 percent of the population are getting the services that are available” (ibid, p.7).

This document also notes that:

“The WHO says the country has roughly only one psychiatrist for every 435,000 people and one psychologist for every 333,000 people. Only 200 beds are available in public mental health facilities, or one for every 172,500 Afghans” (ibid, p.7).

*Reuters* in July 2019 states that:

“Violence, instability and poverty have touched virtually every family and many Afghans suffer from mental health problems. However, facilities for treating such illnesses are scarce” (Reuters (24 July 2019) *Letterbox campaign helps Afghans cope with silent war of mental health*, p.2).

The *National* in July 2019 points out that in Afghanistan:

“...mental health services are scarce...” (National (2 July 2019) *Hidden suffering: Afghanistan's widespread mental health crisis*, p.1).

In June 2019 the *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia* states in a report that

“For the vast majority of the population, however, there are significant barriers to accessing treatment for mental health issues, including a considerable cultural stigma surrounding mental illness and a lack of outpatient mental health services” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia (27 June 2019) *DFAT Country Information Report: Afghanistan*, p.31).

In June 2019 the *European Asylum Support Office* states in a report that there is:

“...one dedicated mental health hospital in the country, and mental health clinics in all provinces. Yet, the country still suffers from lack of trained professionals...” (European Asylum Support Office (June 2019) *EASO Country Guidance: Afghanistan*, p.67).

## References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

### **Sources Consulted**

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