



CÚRAM SLÁINTE POBAIL
CORCAIGH CIARRAI
CORK KERRY
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

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Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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30th November 2021

Deputy Michael Healy Rae,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 55496/21

“To ask the Minister for Health the efforts being made with regard to securing a new CAMHS consultant to deal with children's mental health services in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Healy Rae,

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.

CAMHS services are designed for children and adolescents presenting with moderate to severe mental health disorders. There are a total of two sector based community mental health teams in Kerry, supported by Eist Linn, Child and Adolescent Inpatient Unit. All referrals received to CAMHS services are triaged in a timely manner and the referral is either accepted or rejected at that point. Referrals accepted are wait listed in order of clinical priority and wait lists vary across each sector based community team. Routine referrals are waitlisted as is the standard procedure and urgent referrals are responded to within 7 days in line with national Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The South Kerry CAMHS team has been without a permanent Consultant since August 2016 (with the exception of locum cover). Unfortunately following a successful recruitment campaign in 2018, the candidate who was due to take up post in early 2019 subsequently withdrew their application in December 2018 due to personal circumstances. The post was re-advertised with the Public Appointment Service and interviews were held in late May 2020 however, unfortunately, this did campaign did not yield a successful permanent candidate.

Recruitment efforts have been ongoing and have included local and international advertising of this post. Adverts have been placed on a regular basis in a number medical journals in Ireland, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and North America. In addition, the service has regularly engaged with multiple international recruitment agencies. Despite these efforts we have been unable to secure a permanent candidate to date. There is currently a serious shortage of suitable qualified CAMHS Consultants both at national and at European level.

Notwithstanding the above challenges, Mental Health Services management secured a full time locum for the team and this arrangement was in place from August 2020 to July 2021. Since then, a CAMHS Consultant from Cork has been working with the South Kerry CAMHS team on a 0.6wte basis (i.e. 3 days per week) and provides phone support outside of these days. Furthermore, since August



2021 a number of external CAMHS Consultants have been running weekend clinics to ensure continuity of service to the children of South Kerry, and it's hoped these will run until the end of the year at least.

Management continue all efforts in recruitment of a permanent Consultant to the South Kerry CAMHS team. In addition, QB testing which was rolled out in North Kerry CAMHS in 2020 will now be rolled out in South Kerry CAMHS; this facilitates online assessment for ADHD, and has been proven to reduce waiting lists for children with the condition.

I trust you find the above clarifies the query raised.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Kevin Morrison
A/Head of Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare