



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte,  
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin,  
Baile Phámar, Baile Átha Cliath 20.  
Tel: (01) 6207304 R: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

Head of Operations,  
Mental Health Service, St Loman's Hospital,  
Palmerstown, Dublin 20.  
Tel: (01) 6207304 Email: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

Deputy John Brady,  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

26th October 2021

**PQ Number: 48400/21**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons waiting on the CAMHS waiting list in County Wicklow; the average waiting time; the number waiting more than six months; and if he will make a statement on the matter - John Brady**

---

Dear Deputy Brady,

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.

CAMHS provide specialist mental health service to those aged up to 18 years, who have reached the threshold for a diagnosis of moderate to severe mental health disorder that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health teams, such as moderate to severe anxiety disorders, moderate to severe depression, Bi Polar Affective disorder, Psychosis, moderate to severe eating disorders, self-harm that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health team.

Community CAMHS refers to child and adolescent mental health services that are delivered in outpatient and day hospital settings, with the majority of CAMHS interventions being delivered in the community, close to people's homes. CAMHS community mental health teams (CMHTs) provide clinical assessment, formulation, diagnosis and multi-disciplinary interventions to children and adolescents based on their identified needs. They are also responsible for providing advice, information and support to parents in order to help them to support children and adolescents with moderate to severe mental disorders at home.

### **Community CAMHS**

Waiting lists vary according to Community Healthcare Organisation where although some areas have relatively short waiting lists regrettably waiting times are longer in other counties. Factors such as availability of specialist CAMHS clinicians, current vacancies and difficulties in recruiting in an international context can impact on waiting times in various areas.

CAMHS wait lists are also impacted by capacities in other parts of the system - where young people may not receive early intervention and thus their needs escalate necessitating referrals to CAMHS.



In CAMHS, there are two types of referral; an urgent referral and a routine referral. Every effort is made to prioritise urgent referrals so that young people with high risk presentations are seen as soon as possible and this is often within 24 to 48 hours. Severity of presenting symptoms affects waiting times - where waiting times for those with high risk presentations are shorter. This may impact on wait times for cases that are considered, by a clinician, to be less severe. CAMHS referral teams meet weekly to review all referrals and to assess the risk to the young person.

The reasons for differences around the country relate to availability of specialist CAMHS clinicians, current vacancies and difficulties in recruiting in an international context. CAMHS wait lists are also related to capacities in other parts of the system where young people may not receive early intervention and thus their needs escalate necessitating referrals to CAMHS. Waiting times for young people to be seen by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services continue to be an issue in a number of CHO's. A renewed focus on improving capacity and throughput is in place in this area and some improvement is being shown.

As a result of the recent cyber-attack on HSE systems, the latest set of full data for the number of children waiting to be seen by CAMHS is from March 2021. The table below provides data on the waiting list for Community CAMHS as at March 2021. CHO 6 were unable to return data due to the cyber-attack. Waiting list data collected nationally does not capture data on age range.

	Total	<= 12 weeks No.	> 12 <= 26 weeks No.	>26 <=39 weeks No.	>39 <=52 Weeks No.	>52 Weeks No.
<b>National Total</b>	2,384	972	668	352	222	170
CHO 1	188	99	49	24	16	0
CHO 2	48	41	7	0	0	0
CHO 3	346	118	72	48	30	78
CHO 4	582	162	182	100	96	42
CHO 5	226	115	64	27	16	4
CHO 6	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHO 7	165	100	33	16	6	10
CHO 8	570	251	152	91	41	35
CHO 9	259	86	109	46	17	1

**In 2021**

- 2, 625 children were on the waiting list – an increase of 34 from the February 2021 figure, but 191 less than same period March 2020
- 2, 199 referrals were received in March, 1, 539 referrals accepted, 1, 367 CAMHS appointments were offered and 1, 292 new referrals were seen. YTD 5, 317 referrals were received which is a 10% increase on March 2020 figures of 4, 828 referrals received
- 94% of urgent referrals to CAMHS teams were responded to within 3 working days (target 90%)
- 94.7% of referrals were offered a first appointment within 12 months



Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte,  
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin,  
Baile Phámar, Baile Átha Cliath 20.  
Tel: (01) 6207304 R: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Head of Operations,  
Mental Health Service, St Loman's Hospital,  
Palmerstown, Dublin 20.  
Tel: (01) 6207304 Email: [jim.ryan1@hse.ie](mailto:jim.ryan1@hse.ie)

- 5.5% did not attend their appointment, and excluding these, 77.6% were seen within 12 weeks  
In relation to those waiting over 12 months, this may be attributable to the fact that referrals are categorised as either urgent referral or routine. Every effort is made to prioritise urgent referrals so that young people with high risk presentations are seen as soon as possible and this is often within 24 to 48 hours. Severity of presenting symptoms affects waiting times- where waiting times for those with high risk presentations are shorter. This may impact on wait times for cases that are considered, by a clinician, to be less severe. CAMHS referral teams meet weekly to review all referrals and to assess the risk to the young person. CAMHS wait lists are also impacted by capacities in other parts of the system including primary care psychology and disability services where young people may not receive early intervention and thus their needs escalate necessitating referrals to CAMHS.

Initiatives are underway to increase capacity in Primary Care Psychology Services across the HSE. This has included the funding and recruitment by Mental Health of an additional 120 additional Psychology Assistants to work in Primary Care in recent years. In addition, the recent establishment of the CAMHS Eating Disorder Teams in the Community to help those presenting with Eating Disorders.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

---

**Jim Ryan**  
**Assistant National Director - Head of Operations**  
**National Mental Health Services**