



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy John Lahart.
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

20th October 2021

PQ Number: 48461/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of children admitted in adult mental health units to date in 2021 – John Lahart

Dear Deputy Lahart,

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.

The HSE is committed to age appropriate placements and to minimise the number of admissions of children to adult hospitals and units. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, it will continue to be necessary, where there is a clear clinical imperative, to admit a small number of children to adult units, for the shortest time possible. Some of these admissions relate to a crisis admission where no adolescent bed is immediately available. Distance to the nearest CAMHs in-patient unit can also be a factor when immediate clinical assessment and treatment may be the requirement. In some cases, the presenting clinical needs of the young person, (who may be nearly 18 years old) may be more appropriately assessed and treated in an adult unit.

The National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) is a new state-of-the-art facility located in Portrane, North County Dublin. The development will include a 10 bed secure adolescent inpatient unit.

Children are admitted to adult units after efforts to place them in a Child and Adolescent In -Patient Units are unsuccessful due to unit capacity, presenting clinical needs or geographical factors. The HSE makes every effort to avoid admitting children to adult units, but on occasions where it is necessary, every effort is made to transfer the child to a Child and Adolescent in-patient bed at the earliest opportunity.

One of the functions of the Mental Health Commission is to protect the interests of all persons, including children, in Approved Centres under the Mental Health Act 2001. All admissions of young people under the age of 18 years are notified to the Mental Health Commission in accordance with regulations. All such admissions are also notified to a National CAMHS Lead Manager within Mental Health Services.



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In order to optimise use of existing beds a weekly review of referrals to In-patient Units take place to prioritise urgent admissions based on clinical need.

To address the admission of children to adult hospitals and units:

- The Mental Health Division (MHD) has established and receives daily bed usage data from each of the four in-patient units. This process allows the MHD to monitor national bed usage
- A weekly 'referrals' teleconference call between the MHD and all four in-patient units occurs. Its purpose is to maintain an overview of in-patient CAMHS activity specifically around the number of occupied beds within each unit, number of children on the waiting list for each unit and to manage and prioritise new referrals, especially if a child has been admitted to an adult unit and requires an urgent CAMHS in-patient assessment. The referrals teleconference also acts as a forum whereby empty beds in one area can be utilised to address an urgent bed requirement in another area.
- A dedicated notification system has been established to notify the MHD in real time whenever a child is admitted to an adult unit. This information allows the MHD to engage directly with the relevant CHO Management Team to develop a timely clinical management response to ensure that a child/young person is assessed and if required, transferred to an age appropriate CAMHS as soon as possible.

In 2019, there were 50 admissions of children to adult units. In 2020, this figure reduced to 27 admissions and by the end of August 2021 the figure is 21 admissions YTD, with no admissions of children to adult Units in January. Of these 21 admissions, 18 were aged 17 and 18 years. Of these 81% were Voluntary admissions with Parental consent.

In response to your question, the latest available data is set out in the table below.

2021 YTD August	Total
No. <16 years of adult HSE mental health inpatient units	1
No. <17 years of adult HSE mental health inpatient units	1
No. <18 years of adult HSE mental health inpatient units	19
Total	21

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



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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Ryan".

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