



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
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Deputy Bernard Durkan, T.D.
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2.

22nd September 2021

PQ Number: 41553/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for health the extent to which efforts are being made to upgrade and expand children and adolescent mental health services with particular reference to the need for early assessment, diagnosis and support, and if he will make a statement on the matter - Bernard Durkan

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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 wish to advise as follows:

CAMHS provide specialist Secondary Care 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. The International norm for young people requiring CAMH's intervention is approximately 2% of the U18 population.

CAMHS Inpatient capacity

There are currently 72 CAMHS inpatient beds across four inpatient units in Galway Cork and two units in Dublin. There are also plans for additional beds - bringing the total number of inpatient beds for CAMHS to 104.

- **New Children's Hospital of Ireland**

Construction is ongoing on the New Children's Hospital at the campus of St. James's Hospital in Dublin. The St. James's site ensures that the planned co-location with an adult hospital and, ultimately, tri-location with a maternity hospital, will be delivered. It will accommodate the national specialist eating disorder service with 8 inpatient beds and a 12 bed general inpatient unit. Completion of the new children's hospital is planned for 2023.



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- **New National Forensic Hospital**

The National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) is a new state-of-the-art facility located in Portrane, North County Dublin. The Service will provide care for 170 patients in the facility as well as community and prison in-reach services. The development will also include a 10 bed secure adolescent inpatient unit. Services are due to move in to the facility in 2021.

Community CAMHS

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 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.

In 2008 there were 49 CAMHS Community Mental Health Teams. There are now 73 teams nationally and 2 CAMHS day service programmes.

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 the symptoms reported 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. The CAMHS referral teams meet every week to review all referrals and to assess the risk to the young person.

The latest available data (impacted by recent ICT data issues) as at April 2021 outlines the following:

- 8252 cases were seen Y.T.D in April - an increase on 74% on April 2020
- 83.9% of referrals were offered a first appointment within 12 weeks in April
- 96.8% of referrals were offered a first appointment and seen within 12 months in April
- Y.T.D April 2021, 95% of urgent referrals were responded to within 3 working days – above target of 90% and 12.6% increase on the same period in 2020

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



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context can impact on waiting times in various areas. Where there are recruitment gaps, Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO's) make significant efforts to fill positions on a permanent basis while also looking at the possibility of vacancies being filled on an interim or temporary basis in order to ameliorate the impact on service provision. A post that is designated as a vacant post may be filled at a particular point in time by any combination of agency/overtime/locum staff

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.

One of the key priorities for HSE Mental Health Services is the continued development of comprehensive child and adolescent mental health services to best meet the needs of children and young people within the resources available. The budgetary allocation and staffing levels allocated to CAMHS provides for an expected level of service demand. Continue demographic pressures and increasing demand for service can impact on the ability to deliver services. While the Mental Health Division is cognisant of the need to meet a balanced financial position and deliver a breakeven budgetary position, the continued investment of Programme for Government Development funds will play a key role in enabling mental health services to develop new and existing services. The funding available each year provides for an agreed level of mental health services nationally. Where demand for services continues to exceed what can be supplied through the available funding level the HSE is required to manage within the available resources and will, therefore, prioritise services to those in greatest need.

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