



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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**Deputy David Cullinane,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.**

22nd September 2021

PQ Number: 43101/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost of providing additional dedicated children's beds for psychiatric care to stop the practice of using beds in adult psychiatric services; and if he will make a statement on the matter - David Cullinane.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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.

At present it is not possible to give an accurate cost of providing additional CAMHS In-Patient beds given the range of variables involved. 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 progressing on the New Children's Hospital which is being developed 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.

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.

The HSE is committed to age appropriate placements and to minimise the number of admissions of children to adult units. It also acknowledges 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



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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.

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 the 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.

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 Admissions to Adults Units

- The 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 telecall also stratifies beds used throughout all four in-patient units and acts as a forum whereby empty beds in one area can be utilised to address an urgent bed requirement in another.
- 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.



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The past number of years has shown a significant reduction in the number of U18s being admitted to Adult Approved Centre's. In 2018 there were 83 admissions of children to adult units, 50 in 2019 and 2020 the figure reduced to 27 admissions and at end June 2021 the figure is 13 admission year to date, with no admissions of children to Adult Units in June.

Of these 13 admissions, 12 were aged 17 years. Of these 92% were Voluntary admissions with Parental consent. The length of stay was also very short with most young people admitted for less than 48 Hours before either discharging to a CAMH'S unit or to Community CAMH'S Team

The latest available data (April 2021) outlines that 99% of Bed days used by Children in Mental Health Acute In Patient Units were in CAMHS Inpatient Units (Target 95%).

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