



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Mark Ward.  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

11<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**PQ Number: 19896/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of beds in CAMHS that are filled or unfilled on a monthly basis from January 2021 to date in 2022, by CHO area in tabular form: the reason for the empty beds; and if he will make a statement on the matter - Mark Ward**

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

As per the previous response issued to you in respect of your Parliamentary Question 14137-22, there are currently 68 in-patient CAMHS beds (Linn Dara (24), Merlin Park (16), St Vincent's (12), Eist Linn (16).

The table below provides detail on the location and primary catchment areas of the units.

CAMHS Unit	Location	Primary Catchment Area
Merlin Park (HSE)	Galway	CHO1(a) Sligo/Leitrim/ Donegal, CHO2, CHO3
Eist Linn (HSE)	Cork	CHO4 & CHO5
Linn Dara (HSE)	West Dublin	CHO6, CHO7, CHO8 (a) Laois/Offaly/Longford/ Westmeath
St. Vincent's (HSE funded)	North Dublin	CHO9, CHO1 (b) (Cavan/Monaghan CHO8 (b) (Louth/Meath)

Factors affecting operational bed capacity at any one time can include - difficulties in maintaining required staffing levels due to either staffing difficulties/ COVID impact on staffing, complex and challenging cases which can restrict the ability of the unit to accept other new admissions, clinical case mix on Units and COVID outbreaks in Units.

Infrastructural issues with buildings, renovations, conditions imposed by the Regulator etc. can also affect unit capacity at any particular time.



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Significant investment into the creation of a dedicated high observation suite within the existing Eist Linn CAMHS in-patient unit was completed in 2020 and these beds are now operational. This facility provides much needed capacity for Eist Linn to assess, treat and manage difficult and challenging behaviours expressed as a result of their mental illness in young people, thereby significantly reducing the need to move such children outside of their catchment area to other units across the country.

Enhanced Inpatient CAMHS capacity has seen a reduction in admission to Adult Units, with the number of young people admitted to adult units continuing to fall year on year. In 2018, 84 young people were admitted to an adult approved centre. This figure dropped to 50 in 2019 and further to 27 on 2020. Initial indications for 2021 is that 25 young people were admitted to adult units during this time.

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

- 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, identify where empty beds are and monitor in-patient bed usage
- A weekly 'referrals' teleconference call between the MHD and all four in-patient units takes place. 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. 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.

I attach for your information the following Appendix providing data on the number of beds in CAMHS that are filled or unfilled from January 2021 to date in 2022 in tabular form.

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

Yours sincerely,

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