



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 Gino Kenny  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

21<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**PQ Number: 5418/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health his views on the lack of staff and resourcing for the national Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the damage caused to children and adolescents by the consequent over and inappropriate medication of children; and if he will make a statement on the matter - Gino Kenny**

---

Dear Deputy Kenny,

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 has taken a range of actions to address the findings of the Maskey Report, which was published in January 2022 and is committed to ensuring full implementation of the reports 35 recommendations. The Chief Clinical Officer, and the Chief Operations office will chair a National Oversight Group to oversee, monitor and report on the implementation of the Maskey Report. This Oversight Group will have a strong service user focus and will operate in a fully transparent manner. Progress reports will be publicly available.

While the scope of the Look-Back Review is confined to practices in South Kerry Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, in order to provide assurance to families who need its services, the HSE's National Oversight Group will be commissioning an independently chaired review of medication practice across all CAMHS Teams. At this point it is important to note that there is currently no evidence of mis-prescribing across other CAMHS Teams

The National Oversight Group will also commission an audit of compliance with operational guidelines, as well as a qualitative study of how those who use, work in and refer to CAMHS, experience those services. Information from the planned national audits will guide continued efforts to enhance youth mental health services.

#### **CAMHS Staffing**

From 2012 to 2021, additional investment funding has enabled the development of an additional 18 CAMHS Teams and enhanced the capacity of existing teams, reflected in an increase of accepted referrals by 21% from 2020 to 2021.



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)

Between 2012 and 2021, staffing of CAMHS Teams has grown by 296 WTEs (271 WTEs for clinical staff), equivalent of 61.4% of recommended staffing levels in a Vision for Change (VfC)

Staffing and recruitment is impacted by the current shortage of trained Mental Health staff - a trend which is not unique to Ireland. Ongoing efforts locally, nationally and internationally, are continuing in order to ensure that all available avenues are explored to provide a staffing supply for Mental Health services, this includes CAMHS services. It is often the case that locum, agency and overtime positions fill staff shortages.

### **Agency and Overtime**

The net loss of staff is being replaced in part by agency and overtime, which attracts a premium cost. This can be split into three distinct categories:

- Nursing/Support agency, where agency is required to keep rostering levels at safe levels.
- Nursing/Support agency relating to "specialling" arrangements, which has increased greatly over the last number of years, in part due to reduced use of seclusion and increased regulatory standards
- Medical Agency predominately relating to Medical Consultants in community teams, which are more difficult posts to fill than Consultant posts in acute units.

The regulatory environment and best practice standards mean that this staffing is essential.

Agency and overtime costs are also incurred to ensure essential medical posts are covered through locum/agency arrangements, which Mental Health Services are unable to fill on a permanent basis due to the international labour market. Even with efforts towards permanent appointments, it is apparent that there is a cohort of staff who wish to work through agencies where they can choose their location and pattern of working hours.

Despite these recruitment challenges, National Mental Health Services continue to work with our HR colleagues at local and national level through the HSE Health Business Services to achieve recruitment results in as efficient a time frame as possible in line with HSE recruitment guidelines.

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



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)

Yours sincerely,

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

---

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