

20th July 2022

Deputy Sean Sherlock
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 37209/22

“To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 771 of 21 June 2022, if consideration is being given to utilising other CAMHS units that do not have vacancies in staff to ease the waiting time burden on the family

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are designed for children and adolescents presenting with moderate to severe mental health needs. All referrals received to CAMHS services are triaged as per CAMHS Operational Guideline 2nd Edition Nov 2019. The referral is then either accepted or rejected at that point. 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. This may impact on wait times for presentations that are triaged, to be less severe

As you may be aware, there are long-standing workforce challenges and although additional investment has been approved for some community services, the ability to recruit and retain the community workforce is an on-going significant issue. These workforce challenges have grown over the last 2 years as a result of competing priorities to deliver essential programmes of work including vaccination services, test and trace services, the implementation of key policies as well as on-going operational challenges of winter, the COVID response and the cyber-attack. It is acknowledged that the number of people on waiting lists for treatment or assessment exceeds Sláintecare waiting time targets. It is also important to note that Cork CAMHS, in common with all CAMHS services nationally, has been experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining the services of CAMHS staff in recent years.

With regard to the current Consultant vacancies within the North Cork CAMHS team, I can confirm that there is a CAMHS consultant on site 3 days per week. In addition to this, a consultant from another team is on site for 1 further day and is available to the team on the 5th day. There are also consultant clinics running on Saturday and Sunday.

Furthermore, I wish to assure you that all efforts continue to be made locally to address and reduce waiting list in CAMHS Cork Community Healthcare including the use of telemedicine, agency cover and weekend clinics and we are committed to continuing these efforts to ensure that better access to a

safe and effective service is delivered. Management in Cork Mental Health Services have been taking every measure to acquire the necessary resources, clinical and otherwise to ensure a quality service for the children of Cork going forward.

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



Mr Hugh Scully
A/General Manager
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare