



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte  
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.  
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Deputy Louise O Reilly  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

12<sup>th</sup> July 2022

PQ Number: 33950/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if there are plans to introduce autism services for adults ageing out of the CAMHS service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Louise O'Reilly

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Dear Deputy O' Reilly,

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.

### **Referral Criteria For CAMHS**

Children or adolescents referred to Community CAMHS must fulfil the following criteria:

- Under 18 years old, and
- Consent for the referral has been obtained from parent(s), and
- Presents with a suspected moderate to severe mental health disorder, and
- Comprehensive treatment at primary care level has been unsuccessful or was not appropriate in the first instance.

### **Types of Referrals Not Accepted to CAMHS**

CAMHS is not suitable for children or adolescents where their difficulties are related to learning problems, social problems, behavioral problems or mild to moderate mental health problems. There are many services available to respond to these issues for children and adolescents, for example HSE Primary Care Services, HSE Disability Services, TUSLA, Jigsaw, National Educational Psychology Services (NEPS) and local Family Resource Centres.

CAMHS do not accept the following children or adolescents where there is no evidence of a moderate to severe mental health disorder present:

- Those with an intellectual disability. Their needs are best met in HSE Social Care/HSE Disability Services for the diagnosis and treatment of intellectual disability. However those children or adolescents with



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a mild intellectual disability with moderate to severe mental disorder are appropriate to be seen by CAMHS.

- Those with a moderate to severe intellectual disability and moderate to severe mental disorder. Their needs are best met by CAMHS Mental Health Intellectual Disability (MHID) teams, if present.
- Those whose presentation is a developmental disorder (examples of these could include Dyslexia or Developmental Coordination Disorder). Their needs are best met in HSE Primary Care services and/or Children's Network Disability Teams.
- Those who require assessments or interventions relating to educational needs. These needs are best met in services such as Children's Network Disability Teams or the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS).
- Those who present with child protection or welfare issues, where there is no moderate to severe mental disorder present. These needs are best met by Tusla.
- Those who have a diagnosis of autism. The diagnosis and treatment of autism remains the remit of HSE Primary Care and Children's Network Disability Teams.

Further information can be found in CAMHS Operational Guideline which can be accessed here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/operational-guideline/>

CAMHS only accept referral with a primary diagnosis of moderate to severe mental health disorder.

Children who age out of CAMHS are currently referred to adult MH services, again as the mental illness is the primary diagnosis.

### **Sharing the Vision' Youth Mental Health: Transitions, Specialist Group**

A Youth Mental Health: Transitions Specialist Group has been established, by the HSE Sharing the Vision Implementation Group, at the request of the NIMC Steering Committee. This group convened in September 2021 to focus on enabling Recommendation 36 of the Sharing the Vision implementation plan.

*Appropriate supports should be provided for on an interim basis to service users transitioning from CAMHS to GAMHS. The age of transition should be moved from 18 to 25, and future supports should reflect this.*

The recommendation has two phases, one focusing on current transition practices from CAMHS to adult services, and the other looking to future supports required to move the age of transition to 25 years.



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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony McCusker".

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**Tony McCusker**  
**General Manager Mental Health Services**