



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Steven Matthews,  
Dail Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

13<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**PQ Number: 16781/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health his views on the adequacy of existing mental health supports for children in the Wicklow catchment area; if his attention has been drawn to the significant waiting lists for these essential services; and if he will make a statement on the matter -Steven Matthews**

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Dear Deputy Matthews,

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.

CAMHS provide specialist mental health service to those aged up to 18 years, who have reached the threshold for a diagnosis of moderate to severe mental health disorder that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health teams, such as moderate to severe anxiety disorders, moderate to severe depression, Bi Polar Affective disorder, Psychosis, moderate to severe eating disorders, self-harm that require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health team.

### **Community CAMHS**

Community CAMHS refers to child and adolescent mental health services that are delivered in outpatient and day hospital settings, with the majority of CAMHS interventions being delivered in the community, close to people's homes. CAMHS community mental health teams (CMHTs) provide clinical assessment, formulation, diagnosis and multi-disciplinary interventions to children and adolescents based on their identified needs. They are also responsible for providing advice, information and support to parents in order to help them to support children and adolescents with moderate to severe mental disorders at home.

County Wicklow crosses both CHO 6 and CHO7 and there are 14 Community CAMHS teams across both areas. Opening times vary from service to service based on service user needs, however generally referrals are screened daily during working hours (Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) Outside of these hours, or in an emergency situation where no Community CAMHS Team is available, it is advised that the emergency services are contacted or that the child or adolescent is brought to the Emergency Department of the nearest hospital to access a mental health assessment. In many areas of the country a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist is on call 24 hours and can be contacted by the Accident and Emergency services if required.



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Community CAMHS waiting lists vary across the country. Some CHO areas have relatively short waiting lists, regrettably waiting times are longer in other CHO's. Factors such as availability of specialist CAMHS clinicians, current vacancies and difficulties in recruiting in an international context can impact on waiting times in various areas. I have included the table below which provides data on the waiting list for Community CAMHS for CHO6 and CHO 7 as compared to the National total. This data is at January 2022. Please be advised that, this data is subject to ongoing review and validation. Waiting list data collected nationally does not capture data on age range.

Jan-22	Total	<= 12 weeks No.	> 12 <= 26 weeks No	>26 <=39 weeks No	>39 <=52 Weeks No	>52 Weeks No
<b>National Total</b>	2,949	1,339	698	433	241	238
CHO 6	524	347	123	42	11	1
CHO 7	101	77	16	8	0	0

### Eating Disorder Services

In Jan 2018, the HSE launched its Model of Care for Eating Disorders. This aims to establish 16 teams (8 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service and 8 Adult) across the country that will provide specialist eating disorder services serving populations of 500,000 and greater.

There are currently two Eating Disorder specialist community teams based in CAMHS, one in CHO4, (Cork & Kerry Regional Eating Disorder Service CAREDS, operational since May 2019) and the other based in CHO 7 (Linn Dara Community Eating Disorder Service LDCEDS). In late 2021, funding for 20 WTEs (1.7m full year costs) was released to commence recruitment of 3 new teams - CHO 2 CAMHS, CHO 4 and CHO 9 Adult services.

Children and adolescents with an eating disorder diagnosis who require inpatient treatment can be referred to one of the four CAMHS inpatient approved centres. There are currently 20 dedicated eating disorder beds across the four CAMHS units; Linn Dara, Dublin, St Vincent's in Dublin, Eist Linn in Cork and Merlin Park, Galway. Of the 20 ED beds nationally, Linn Dara and Merlin Park have 14 Specialist ED beds (SEDBs). As part of the new children's hospital development, there will be an additional eight specialist eating disorder beds as part of a new 20-bedded CAMHS in-patient approved centre.

Eating disorders are serious mental disorders with high levels of physical and psychological comorbidity, disability and mortality. Both Linn Dara and Merlin Park Approved Centres provide Level 4 care and treatment for children and adolescents. Level 4 is described in the HSE Model of Care for Eating Disorders, as the most intensive treatment setting.



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### **Inpatient CAMHS**

Linn Dara approved centre which is located in West Dublin, provides inpatient CAMHS for CHO6, CHO7 and parts of CHO8. Currently there are 24 beds (22 and 2 High Observation Beds) registered with the Mental Health Commission. There are an additional 48 Inpatient CAMHS beds available in three units across the country (Eist Linn, Merlin Park and St Joseph's, Fairview) and these beds are available to all CHO's. Nationally a further 20 beds will be provided at the new Children's Hospital, which will include 8 Specialist Eating Disorder Beds. 10 additional Forensic CAMHS beds will be provided in the new National Forensic Facility currently under construction in Portrane, which will bring the total number of beds to 102.

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**