



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Bernard J. Durkan,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

08th April 2022

PQ Number: 17280/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which the CAMHS services is being improved and expanded to take account of extra demand; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Bernard J. Durkan

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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.

Service Improvements in CAMHS

CAMHS Operational Guideline (COG)

In June 2019, the CAMHS COG was published following an extensive review and consultation process that took into consideration the views of service users, family members, front line staff and management working within HSE mental health services and in other organisations working with children and adolescents. This document follows from a review of the CAMHS Standard Operating Procedure (2015). The audit of compliance of CAMHS teams with operational guidelines (as announced by An Taoiseach 27/01/22), will be made against the CAMHS COG on the basis of a cross mapping with relevant recommendations in the Maskey Report.

CAMHS Connect Remote Hub (s)

The HSE is determined to fully utilising opportunities offered by telehealth technologies to mitigate recruitment challenges and modernise delivery of mental health care. This will include piloting and expanding tele psychiatry programmes in Wicklow, Galway and Mayo. Through a remote hub, these service delivery models can help address recruitment gaps in geographical areas while at the same time providing an enhanced service user experience.



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Pathway for children with complex needs

In order to ensure a person-centred pathway to meet the needs of children with a complex disability and their families, the HSE and TUSLA have agreed a revised Joint Working Protocol (2020) to promote best outcomes for children known to either or both agencies.

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.

Enhanced in-patient capacity

There are currently 68 in-patient CAMHS beds (Linn Dara (24), Merlin Park (16), St Vincent's (12), and Eist Linn (16)). 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 have the capacity 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.



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Forensic CAMHS

A new 10-bedded Forensic CAMHS unit has now been completed within the NFMHS site in Portrane. This new facility, when operational, will be the first of its kind within the state and will offer 'state of the art' secure care facilities for young people up to the age of 18.

Youth Mental Health Services

The HSE has over a number of years invested in 'upstream' youth mental health services, including Jigsaw and other funded agencies in the community and voluntary sector who are providing enhanced services for children and young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties who do not need to access specialist mental health services. Since 2015, the HSE has invested €9.1m development funding to support the establishment and operation of Jigsaw services with thirteen sites now in place. Jigsaw offered 23,075 appointments to young people in 2020.

Primary Care Mental Health Services

Significant work had been undertaken to develop Primary Care Psychology Services through investment in the Assistant Psychologist programme (€5m). In line with mental health policy and Sláintecare objectives, these initiatives have successfully facilitated access to services at the lowest level of complexity, ensuring effective use of community and in-patient specialist mental health services.

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

Yours sincerely,

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