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Deputy Patrick Costello,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

09<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**PQ Number: PQ 49513/22**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the supports that his Department and HSE are putting in place to ensure that sufficient educational and child psychologists are being trained and retained to tackle staffing issues within CAMHS. -Patrick Costello**

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Dear Deputy Costello,

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.

Further to my response to your Parliamentary Question **PQ 49512/22**, the cornerstone of mental health service delivery in secondary care is the multi-disciplinary Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). Multi-disciplinary CMHTs enable a range of professional perspectives to be brought to bear in case formulation, care planning and ultimately, service delivery. They enable integrated care for service users predicated on supporting them in their own recovery in their own community. This approach is in line with our mental health service strategy, *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone (2020)*, and fits squarely into overall health service strategy, as set out through *Sláintecare*. Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are also delivered in line with this strategy and therefore CAMHS teams are structured on a multidisciplinary approach to enable integrated care for service users.

Where the predecessor to *Sharing the Vision, A Vision for Change (2006)*, was prescriptive on the composition of multi-disciplinary teams, *Sharing the Vision* recognises that in line with changes in best practice and to enable future flexibility in terms of service delivery as best practice continues to develop, additional competencies are recommended for multi-disciplinary teams, to complement the core skills and competencies. In addition to core skills like psychiatry, social work, clinical psychology and occupational therapy, additional competencies like dietetics, peer support, outreach and job coaching, for example, may be appropriate and required. Rather than be specific on staffing numbers and structure, a flexible approach can be more responsive to local needs, which empowers local responses and helps achieve recovery-oriented outcomes.



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Under *Sharing the Vision*, the HSE envisages an expansion of mental health service provision overall. Clearly, this will entail analysis of skill mix requirements which in turn, will require comprehensive workforce planning. To achieve this, the HSE, in conjunction with the Department of Health is developing a Health and Social Care Workforce Planning Strategy, and Workforce Planning Projection Model, based on international best practice. In addition, reforms under *Sláintecare* are centered on having sufficient capacity in the workforce and the appropriate configuration of staff and skill-mix, which are integral to improved service delivery, including that for Mental Health.

The HSE continue to expand the number of health and social care professionals employed. In general the total number of psychologists employed in Mental Health has increased by 9% from 379 WTE in December 2019 to 413 WTE in September 2022. A range of training supports are available and the implementation of Performance Achievement provides further opportunity for employees and line managers to focus on professional and personal development needs.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Mc Cusker'.

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**Tony Mc Cusker**  
**General Manager**  
**National Mental Health Services**