



Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
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Deputy Mark Ward,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

09th March 2023

PQ Number: 8841/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will identify the seven audits into CAMHS that were referenced at the Oireachtas sub-Committee on Mental Health recently; the stages they are at; when are they due to be completed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

The seven audits into CAMHS that were referenced at the Oireachtas sub-Committee on Mental Health recently were as follows:

(3) The HSE conducted three audits following the publication of the Maskey report (prescribing practice, CAMHS Operational Guidelines, qualitative research of experiences)

(1) Mental Health Commission review of CAMHS provision

(1) Clinical review of all open cases not seen for six months – HSE audit in response to the MHC report

(1) Physical health monitoring of patients on neuroleptic medication across all 73 teams – HSE audit in response to the MHC report

(1) College of Psychiatry of Ireland completed their own audit report on the functioning of CAMHS Teams

HSE Audit in response to the Maskey Report

Please see below update in relation to the three audits following the publication of the Maskey report.

i) Audit of CAMHS prescribing practice: Independently chaired by Dr Collette Halpin, an expert team has been established to conduct a review of prescribing practice in CAMHS. Membership of the expert group also includes Dr Imelda Whyte, nominated by the College of Psychiatry, and Dr Suzanne McCarthy, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Pharmacy Practice, UCC. The expert team is administratively supported by the HSEs National Centre for Clinical Audit and Community Operations. Following a successful pilot, and supported by webinars, all CAMHS have undertaken a self-audit of a random selection of case files where the child



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or young person had been prescribed medication. There has been a 100% response rate from CAMHS teams in provision of requested information. As this was a self-audit, teams have had an opportunity to address and notify of any arising concerns, while the national analysis and expert report is being finalised. The national audit commenced July 2022 and the final report has been made available.

(ii) An audit of compliance with the CAMHS Operational Guideline (2019) has commenced to include the design of a bespoke audit framework, a gap analysis of adherence to the COG, any regional or other factors impacting same, and conclusions on the requirement for targeted service improvement. The successful provider commenced work in August 2022 and a pilot of the audit framework has been completed. It is expected the audit will be completed by end of Quarter 1, 2023.

(iii) UCC has been engaged as an academic partner to conduct qualitative research into CAMHS experiences. This research will involve a qualitative study of CAMHS experiences in order to determine the lived experience of service users, families and carers, staff, referrers and other key stakeholders interacting with the CAMHS service. The research methodology for this audit strand required ethical approval. The research has now commenced. It is expected the research will be completed within six months.

HSE Audit in response to the Mental Health Commission Report

In February 2022, the Inspector of Mental Health Services announced the decision to carry out a review of the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in accordance with her powers under the 2001 Mental Health Act. The HSE has engaged fully in the review process, which will contribute to our ongoing work to improve services, in collaboration with staff, as well as children, young people and families who require the support of CAMHS.

Following from findings in the five reviewed CHO areas, the MHC made the following recommendation

- *'An immediate clinical review of all open cases in all CAMHS Teams, using the NICE Guidelines and the CAMHS Operational Guideline. Particular focus should be given to identifying and assessing open cases of children who have been lost to follow-up, and physical health monitoring of those on medication'.*

The HSE has confirmed that it will conduct a review of open cases as recommended by the MHC. This review of open cases will provide assurance that these children and young people are receiving appropriate care, reflective of their current and future needs. The review will include a focus on physical health monitoring of those who are on medication on the basis of NICE or similar, relevant guidelines.

The HSE review will be conducted in two phases.



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Phase 1: Identification of cases

All CAMHS teams nationally have been asked to conduct a review of all open cases. For the purposes of this review, an open case is defined as a referral that has been accepted and seen for their initial assessment and they are currently under the care of the CAMHS Team. A guidance pack and associated documentation has been sent out to all Chief Officers and Heads of Service for Mental Health in the CHO areas this week requesting detail on the number of open cases identified. Each area has been asked to report back on this by the 17th March.

Phase 2: Contact with young people/ parents and scheduling of reviews

Once CAMHS teams have assessed and prioritised those cases who have not been seen within the last 6 months and have no follow up appointment scheduled:

- Contact will be made with the young person/parent to invite them to come in for a review appointment with a member of the CAMHS team within the next 3 months, unless urgent concerns are indicated.
- If they no longer need the support of CAMHS, the child/young person should be discharged, and care transferred back to their GP/referral agent.
- If the team cannot make contact with the young person/ parents within 4 weeks, the file will be closed and referred back to the GP/referral agent.
- If for any reason the young person needs to be re-referred to CAMHS at a later date, the GP/referral agent can arrange for this and priority given.

It is anticipated that this will be complete by the end of May 2023.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony McCusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services