



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

16th August 2023

PQ Number: 35314/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health for an update on CAMHS inpatient capacity; if there are plans to restore capacity; if there are plans to increase current capacity; 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.

As per my previous response to your Parliamentary Question **28968/23**, the position remains unchanged.

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.

There are four inpatient CAMHS units in Ireland. Eist Linn CAMHS inpatient unit which is situated in Cork, Linn Dara CAMHS inpatient unit which is situated in Dublin South West, Merlin Park CAMHS inpatient unit which is situated in Galway and St Vincent's CAMHS inpatient unit. Currently, there are 72 CAMHS inpatient beds registered with the Mental Health Commission, 51 of which are currently operational. Please see table below for further details.

CAMHS Bed Status as of 25/07/2023

Unit	Registered Beds	Current Operational Beds	Occupied Beds
Eist Linn	16	16	6
Linn Dara	24	13	9
Merlin Park	20	14	9



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St Vincent's	12	8	7
Total	72	51	31

From time to time, the number of operational beds, i.e., those beds available for admissions, can fluctuate below this number based on clinical risk assessment within a specific unit. Examples of such risks would include availability of appropriately trained staff, the clinical mix and risks associated with the patients already admitted to the unit (severe challenging behaviours, vulnerable patient group).

The current bed reduction across units is due to staffing shortages. Despite the reduced bed capacity of 51 operational beds, there continues to be available capacity to admit when a young person requires intensive in-patient treatment.

Referral to a CAMHS in-patient units is not suitable or appropriate for everyone and where clinically indicated, avoiding admission is the preferred option. The CAMHS Operational Guidelines (2019) clearly describes the CAMHS in-patient service and how a young person is referred for assessment and the process that takes place when considering if the young person requires admission.

Further information can be found here:

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

In terms of plans to expand inpatient bed capacity, a new 10 bedded forensic CAMHS unit has been completed within the NFMHS site in Portrane. This new facility, which is expected to be operational by Q3-Q4 2024, is dependent on the ability to recruit staff, 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.

In addition, as part of the Children's Hospital Ireland (CHI) development, there will be a new 20 bedded CAMHS unit. This unit will be under the clinical and operational governance of HSE CAMHS (Linn Dara Team) and will provide 12 general CAMHS and 8 specialist eating disorder inpatient beds.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services