



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

26th April 2023

PQ Number: 16024/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of CAMHS teams nationally; the target number of CAMHS teams by the HSE; the timeline for their rollout; 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.

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.

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,



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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.

Currently there are 75 Community CAMHS Teams in operation nationally. This includes two specialist Eating Disorders CAMHS teams one serving Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CHO4) and the other serving Community Healthcare Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow (CHO7). A further specialist Eating Disorders CAMHS team for CHO2 is at advanced stage of recruitment and is expected to be operational in the near future. In addition, there are four baseline CAMHS ID teams resourced nationally.

Under *Sharing the Vision*, we envisage 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 improve service delivery, including that for Mental Health.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Ryan'.

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