



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
Baile Átha Cliath 20, D20 HK69

Office of the
Assistant National Director
Mental Health Operations

St Lomans Hospital, Palmerstown,
Dublin 20, D20 HK69

www.hse.ie
@hselive

t: 01-6207304

e: PQReps.NatMHOPS@hse.ie

Deputy Mark Ward.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

1st March 2024

PQ Number: 44362/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the interactions between CAMHS and the Integrated Childrens Service Forum; 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 services 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 multi-disciplinary mental health teams.

There are some children and adolescents with complex clinical issues who may present with a number of difficulties and a moderate to severe mental health disorder at the same time. Where the child or adolescent presents with a moderate to severe mental health disorder, it is the role of CAMHS to provide appropriate multi-disciplinary mental health assessment and treatment for the mental health disorder. This may involve joint working or shared care with other agencies including HSE Primary Care, Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT's) and other agencies supporting children and adolescents.

The Joint Working Protocol Primary Care, Disability and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service recommends that a co-operative and collaborative culture between Primary Care, Disability and Child and Adolescent Health Services must be promoted. An important aspect of this joint working is that all services facilitate children accessing the appropriate service as early as possible to prevent multiple referrals and/or re-referrals in order to facilitate timely access to appropriate support.

The Primary Care, Children's Disability and Child and Adolescent Mental health services aim to make the referral process as seamless and timely as possible by collaborating to provide comprehensive information to families and other referrers and by communication with all relevant parties effectively and efficiently. When information indicates that there is more than one service which could best



meet the child's needs, consultation should take place with the other service to determine which is the most appropriate or whether a joint approach is indicated.

An Integrated Children's Services Forum (ICSF) in each area provides a formal, regular mechanism for services to meet and discuss the individual children whose needs are not clear or who may require some level of joint assessment or intervention and for whom direct consultation between the relevant services has not led to a decision on the best arrangement for the child. In situations where differences arise in relation to the management of a case and a local joint decision cannot be agreed, the practitioners must make every effort to resolve them so that the appropriate interventions can proceed. Where this cannot be agreed, the matter must be escalated by the Chair of the ICSF to the relevant CHO Head of Service. It is the responsibility of the Chief Officer in each CHO area to implement this protocol at operational level. A joint National Oversight Group was convened to oversee the implementation of the protocol.

Further information can be found in the CAMHS Operational Guideline available here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/operational-guideline/camhs-operational-guideline-2019.pdf>

and the Joint Working Protocol Primary Care, Disability and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/progressing-disability/pds-programme/documents/hse-joint-working-protocol-between-primary-care-disability-and-child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service.pdf>

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah Hennessy'.

Sarah Hennessy
General Manager
Child & Youth Mental Health Office