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22nd February 2024

Deputy Róisín Shortall,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 45907/23

“To ask the Minister for Health for an update on the review of North Kerry CAMHS, including information on the scope of the review, areas or periods it may exclude; the expected timeline for its completion; and if he will make a statement on the matter”

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive have been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted for the Minister for Health for response.

North Kerry CAMHS Audit

The North Kerry CAMHS Audit audited 50 files (*Final report in Feb 2023*) and found that harm outcomes were assigned to 16 cases out of the 50. This informed the decision to establish a Lookback Review into North Kerry CAMHS. 11 of those 16 cases required an Open Disclosure meeting and 5 required Clinical Review meetings in order to determine the level of harm.

North Kerry Lookback Review

The North Kerry Lookback Review was commissioned by Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and preparatory work began in the summer of 2023. This review was established to examine potential clinical issues and identify any resulting harm and potential for harm to children and young people whilst attending North Kerry CAMHS under the clinical lead of a Consultant Psychiatrist. This review will include all components of the child and young person's clinical pathway in CAMHS.

The purpose of the Review is to identify harm and potential for harm to children and young people while attending North Kerry CAMHS under the clinical lead of a Consultant Psychiatrist. The Lookback Review Process will be carried out on a phased basis. Phase 1 has commenced with a review of the current caseload in North Kerry CAMHS up to and including the 21st November 2022.

The current caseload (322 files) will be categorised by the North Kerry CAMHS Look Back Review Administrative Team and will be reviewed by the Consultant Review Group in the following order:

- i. Young person prescribed a major tranquiliser / anti-psychotic medication;
- ii. Young person prescribed more than 1 medication (excluding Melatonin);
- iii. Young person prescribed 1 medication (excluding Melatonin);
- iv. Young person not reviewed within the last 6 months with no scheduled follow up on file;
- v. Other cases.

Once Phase 1 has been completed, that outcome will determine the detail, extent & circumstances of Phase 2.



Progress of North Kerry CAMHS Lookback Review (LBR)

Currently 12 Consultant CAMHS Psychiatrists from across the country have joined the North Kerry CAMHS LBR Consultant Review Group. The Consultants continue to review files with weekly meetings held with the Consultant Review Group to discuss and sign off on reviewed cases.

In June 2023, it was conveyed that the review would conclude the by the year's end. This review necessitates input from independent experts specialising in CAMHS, and we currently have a team of such experts in position. However, the review process is complex, and we are limited by the availability of the independent CAMHS experts which has unfortunately delayed progress to date.

I wish to apologise for the delay and for not meeting the original timelines as set out. We hugely regret this delay and want to reassure you that each case will get a thorough and consistent assessment of care and treatment while attending North Kerry CAMHS. As the individual file reviews are being completed we are making direct contact with the individuals / families concerned.

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie O'Neill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Ms. Julie O' Neill
Interim Head of Service
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**