



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

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Deputy Violet- Anne Wynne.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

06th February 2024

PQ Number: 4646/24

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that parents are now being advised not to disclose an autism diagnosis when accessing support from CAMHS; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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 HSE National Mental Health office is not aware of any situation whereby parents are being advised not to disclose an autism diagnosis when accessing support from CAMHS. In line with the fundamental principles of *Sláintecare*, the overall service objective for the HSE is to ensure access to the right care, at the right time in the right place by placing the patient/service user at the heart of everything we do.

Section 4.2 of the CAMHS Operational Guidelines (2019), sets out the criteria for the types of referrals suitable for CAMHS and the types of referrals not suitable for CAMHS. When a referral is received, it is screened by a member of the CAMHS team, such as the Team Coordinator, in consultation with the Consultant Psychiatrist. One of the aims of an initial screening/assessment is to gather background information to try and understand what has been going on in the child or young person's life. An initial assessment also seeks to ensure that CAMHS is the right service for the child or young person.

The initial assessment covers a range of areas including personal information, social history, family history, education, physical health, lifestyle factors, risk assessments, strengths and protective factors and the views of the child or adolescent and their parent(s) on the current situation.

If a child or adolescent is screened or assessed as not having a moderate or severe mental disorder and as not requiring specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the GP/referral agent and the parent(s) are advised in writing as soon as possible outlining the reason why the child or young person is not being accepted. If further advice or management of a referral is required, this may be coordinated by the GP through HSE Primary Care and/or Disability services.

Further information can be found by consulting with the CAMHS Operational Guidelines. Please see below:



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

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sarah Hennessey
General Manager
Child and Youth Mental Health Office