



Deputy Claire Kerrane.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

10th March 2025

PQ Number: 8499/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if she will consider changing the rules where a private assessment is not recognised by CAMHS and therefore, delays access to essential supports for children based on a parent paying privately for example in cases where ADHD is diagnosed via a private assessment and then not accepted by public services; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Claire Kerrane

Dear Deputy Kerrane,

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.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provide specialist mental health services for those aged up to 18 years, who have reached the threshold for a diagnosis of moderate to severe mental health disorders who require the input of a multi-disciplinary mental health team.

The HSE published the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Operating Guideline (COG) in 2019 in order to streamline processes according to international best practice. The purpose of the CAMHS Operational Guideline is to provide consistency in the service delivery of CAMHS throughout the country. The Guideline aims to:

- Build on the existing good practice already in place in CAMHS
- Provide an Operational Guideline that CAMHS teams can adhere to
- Ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements are met
- Ensure that all employees and management are clear on their roles and responsibilities
- Ensure that children, adolescents and their parent(s)/guardians are clear on the service provided by CAMHS
- Ensure that referral agents and other agencies involved in the provision of care to children and adolescents are clear on the service provided by CAMHS
- Provide a framework for audit and evaluation

Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the Operational Guideline clearly set out the referral and access criteria for CAMHS and maps out the process by which a child/ young person can be referred to the service.



It is important to highlight that the fact that a private ADHD assessment has been completed, does not necessarily mean that CAMHS is the appropriate service for the child/young person. This can only be determined following a CAMHS assessment. The fact that a child/young person may have seen a private practitioner who has determined a diagnosis, does not bypass the assessment process that all referrals to HSE CAMHS must undergo.

In a situation whereby a private assessment has been undertaken and that there is an indication that a referral is being sought from a public provided secondary specialist MH care service, then it is appropriate that this is done through formal primary care channels, in this case the child/young persons' General Practitioner (GP). **Section 4.7** of the Operational Guideline clearly lists the professionals and agencies through which referrals can be accepted. Any private ADHD assessment should be informed to the GP anyway, and if follow-on referral to HSE CAMHS is indicated, then the GP is best placed to initiate this process.

Further detail on the CAMHS Operational Guideline can be found here:

<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/camhs-operational-guideline-2019.pdf>

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Braham
Senior Operations Manager (Area DON)
Access and Integration; HSE Mental Health Services