



Office of the Assistant National Director
Access and Integration

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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
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Deputy Sorca Clarke.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

24th July 2025

PQ Number: 37667/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health has the €93 million spent on outsourcing mental health care led to any measurable reductions in waiting times for CAMHS, primary care psychology, AONs and so on- and can you provide that data. -Sorca Clarke

Dear Deputy Clarke,

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.

There are currently no CAMHS services being outsourced. It is also important to note that waiting lists for children within Primary Care Psychology services do not come under CAMHS/Mental Health, rather it is a service provided, managed and funded directly by Primary Care. The €93 million referred to was spent in 2024 on private placements. Such placements are for patients whose needs cannot currently be met within existing statutory services necessitating placements with voluntary or private providers. These placements are often necessary for those with multi-axial disorders and severe eating disorders in adults. It is worth noting that if such outsourced treatment programmes were provided by statutory services such as the HSE, this would obviously bear a direct cost which may or may not exceed the current €93 million spend. It is therefore sometimes appropriate both from a cost and service agility point of view to employ the services of providers.

The HSE published a 3-year Child and Youth Mental Health Action Plan, aiming to reform and improve mental health services for children and young people. The plan outlines 16 key actions to ensure timely and equitable access to high-quality care. It emphasises a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including early intervention and prevention.

While the plan outlines actions over a three year period up to the end of 2027, we expect its full implementation will take significantly longer in some instances due to the transformational nature of some of the programmes of work. There are critical factors required to support this ambitious plan including dedicated multi-annual funding; strong clinical governance and leadership in the six Health Regions; integrated information systems such as an electronic health record for CAMHS; support from our stakeholders including government, key statutory and voluntary agencies, our staff and young people and their parents.

A key objective of the HSE's Child and Youth Mental Health Office (CYMHO) is to improve access and address CAMHS waiting lists arising from increasing demand and case complexity. This includes



various measures such as increased collaboration with Primary Care and Disability Services, stronger links with the voluntary and NGO sector and greater use of digital mental health innovations. The Child and Youth Mental Health Office is currently piloting a small Clinical Waitlist Intervention to provide ADHD assessments in Galway in conjunction with an agreed service provider. Subject to the effectiveness of this project, further outsourcing may be considered.

Further information on the HSE Child and Youth Mental Health Action Plan can be found here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/publications/hse-child-and-youth-mental-health-office-3-year-action-plan.pdf>

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony McCusker
General Manager
Access and Integration; HSE Mental Health Services