



# Supporting Traveller Families' Mental Health

Understanding the Stages of Support Services to Access for Children and Adolescents



# Introduction

This resource is an initiative developed by representatives of HSE Mental Health Services and the HSE Traveller Health Unit, Cork/ Kerry Community Healthcare, in collaboration with Traveller organisations across the Cork and Kerry region including: Cork Traveller Women’s Network, East Cork Travellers, Kerry Travellers Health Development Project, Travellers of North Cork, Traveller Visibility Group (Cork), West Cork Traveller Project, and the HSE Healthy Minds Suicide and Mental Health Project for Travellers (Cork).

The resource seeks to support the wellbeing and mental health of Traveller families by:

- acknowledging the difficulties experienced by the community in navigating support services for children and young people.
- providing an overview of key services and interventions available for children and young people throughout their developmental stages, in a central Traveller friendly document.
- providing information and contact details of these key services.
- outlining additional Traveller specific services available that can offer support.

According to Our Geels: All Ireland Traveller Health Study, 2010, the Traveller community is demographically young with 42% of Travellers under 15 years, compared to 21% of the wider population, and 63% of Travellers under 25 years, compared to 35% of the wider population. The mental health disparity experienced by Travellers is well documented in Irish health literature, and forms the basis for the development of initiatives to reduce the inequality. Thus, supporting access of young Travellers to key services is important to ensure early intervention, recovery, and to help break the cycle of poor mental health.



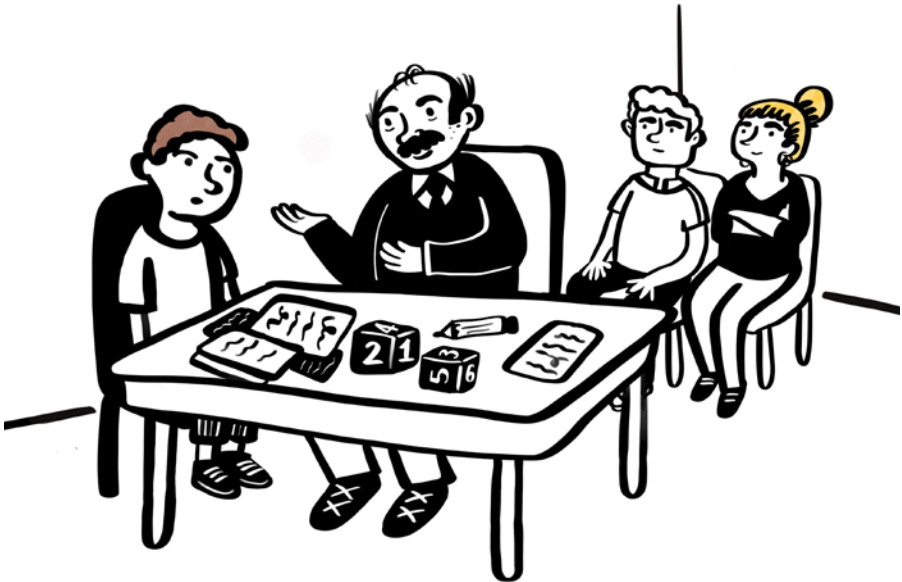
With so many different services and supports, it can be confusing. Travellers may have had bad experiences in the past with certain services, maybe lost their trust or are unsure of where to get the help they need. This can exacerbate poor mental health. This resource gives information on services that are available to Traveller families in HSE Primary Care Services and Mental Health Services, as well as in the community. It also explains what the different services are, what they do and how Travellers can access them.

# HSE Primary Care

## Early Intervention

The Early Intervention Team is for children, aged 0-6 years, and their families who have complex developmental needs. The team may include an Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, and Speech and Language Therapist.

They accept referrals for children who are under 5 years of age with queried developmental needs, who are experiencing difficulty in at least two of the following areas: speech and language; motor skills; social interaction; making friends and managing feelings; learning new tasks.



The Early Intervention Team offers assessment and support services. They offer a wide range of supports and services to children and families attending the service. These inputs may include:

- Multidisciplinary team assessments of children and families strengths and needs
- Individual intervention
- Group interventions
- Referral to Primary Care Service as required for intervention
- Parent Programmes (e.g. Early Bird, Hanen 'More Than Words', Hanen 'Talkability', and Parents Plus)
- 'Supporting Your Child' series of talks

A referral to the Early Intervention Team can be made by your GP, Physiotherapist, Speech Therapist, Public Health Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Social Worker or any other health care professional. Your child must be under 5 years old at the time of referral.

## Assessment of Need

Assessment of Need is a self-referral system. If your child has a disability or you think they may have a disability you can apply for an Assessment of Need. The assessment will identify your child's health needs. The assessment will also identify what services are required to meet your child's needs.

## Assessment of Need (continued)

An application can be made by a parent, legal guardian or personal advocate. A young person aged 16 or 17 years can apply for their own Assessment of Need. You can request a referral form by calling the Assessment of Need office in your area. The completed form should be returned to the same Assessment of Need office in your area.



Usually a team will assess your child and identify their health needs. Some children will be assessed by one person. The Assessment Officer will decide whether each child needs a team assessment or an individual assessment. An Assessment of Need is a short screening assessment. It is not a diagnostic assessment. After this, you will receive an assessment report. The assessment will provide you with information on the health needs of your child. You will also receive a list of the services your child needs. Once you have the report you can then apply

for relevant Social Welfare Allowances i.e. Domiciliary Care Allowance, and access required services by referral from your GP including:

- **CAMHS**
- **Autism Assessment**
- **Speech and Language Therapy**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Physiotherapy**
- **Psychology**

If you are unhappy with the assessment you can have your case reviewed by contacting the Disability Act Complaints Officer. Assessment of Need should begin within 3 months of making a referral. If this does not happen a complaint can also be made to the Assessment of Need Officer in your area which may help your assessment to be seen faster.

## **Assessment of Need contact details:**

021 4927100	- South Lee (Cork)
021 4927100	- North Lee (Cork)
022 58646	- North Cork
023 8890352	- West Cork
064 6670793	- Kerry

# HSE Mental Health Services

## CAMHS

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and is a service that provides assessment and treatment for young people and their families who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

While a broad range of services support the mental health of children and adolescents, the term 'CAMHS' is usually applied very specifically to services that provide specialist mental health treatment and care to young people up to 18 years of age. To access a CAMHS service you need to be referred by your GP.

### **What do CAMHS mean by 'Mental Health Difficulties?'** **What are 'Mental Health Difficulties'?**

These are conditions like, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, psychosis and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to name a few. Sometimes these difficulties are noticeable by persistent feelings of sadness, worry, stress, concentration issues or deliberate self-harm.

## **Eating Disorder Team**

This is a specialist out-patient team in CAMHS for children with eating disorders.



## Liaison Psychiatry

Liaison Psychiatry for CAMHS is available via Cork University Hospital, the Mercy Hospital and University Hospital Kerry during the day time for children in hospital or presenting to emergency services.



## Referrals and Accessing CAMHS

A referral has to be made by a GP and this information will be reviewed by CAMHS before assessment or an appointment is given. CAMHS teams have waiting lists which can be shorter or longer depending on circumstances of the CAMHS team in areas. Once you are on a waiting list you can contact CAMHS and provide an update on your young person's circumstances and continue to liaise and discuss new information with your GP.

Not all young people referred to CAMHS will require medication and intervention. Some young people may have support needs that are best supported in primary care services.

## Ages

CAMHS is available for children and young people up to age 18. If you are under 18 and married then you will be referred to adult services.

Once a young person turns 18 they can sign their own consent form to make a transfer request to Adult Mental Health Services if required and so GP letters and reports about them can be made available to these services. CAMHS work with the family and young person from 3-6 months prior to a young person turning 18 to support this transfer process. Once a young person turns 18 they can decide on their parents' ongoing involvement.

HSE Mental Health Services provide guidance for service users' families, carers and supporters. This includes the care they can expect for their relatives when they use mental health services, and are unwell or feeling emotional distress. It also provides ways of dealing with issues like confidentiality in a useful way that can hopefully be helpful to all.



# Emergency Support Services



If you are concerned about a young person that is at risk it is important to get help and ensure their safety. You can call the Garda and an ambulance who will support this. You can also take them to the nearest emergency department where there is on-call psychiatry (Cork University Hospital, the Mercy Hospital, University Hospital Kerry).

**Emergency services on 112 and 999**

**South Doc - 1850 335999**

**Cork University Hospital - 021 4921372**

**Mercy University Hospital - 021 4935241**

**University Hospital Kerry - 066 7184000**

**Samaritans Freephone Helpline - 116 123**



# Community Services and Support

## Listening Services/ Helplines

The logo for Samaritans, featuring the word "SAMARITANS" in white capital letters on a green rectangular background.

The **Samaritans** helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone struggling to cope. Call for confidential, non-judgemental support.

Tel. 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[www.samaritans.ie](http://www.samaritans.ie)



**Pieta House** offers free specialised treatment to clients who self-harm, suffer from suicidal ideation or have made multiple suicide attempts. Clients receive an intensive programme of one-to-one counselling lasting about four to six weeks. Pieta house accept self referral or GP referral. Emergencies can be seen within 72 hours.

Tel. 1800 247 247

Email: [info@pieta.ie](mailto:info@pieta.ie).

Text help to 51444

**Childline** **Childline** provides a free and confidential listening service to children and young people up to the age of 18. The Childline helpline is open every day, 24 hours a day and Childline Online Chat is open every day 10a.m. – 10p.m.

Free helpline 1800 666666

Online chat [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

Free text the word “Talk” to 50101



**Parentline** is a national, confidential helpline that offers parents support, information and guidance on all aspects of being a parent and any parenting issues.

Tel. 1890 927 277

(10am to 9pm Mon to Thurs)

(10am to 4pm Fri)



## Further Resources



Health Service Executive (HSE) Online Service provides information on mental health and on a broad range of supports and services across the country.

[www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)

Text hello to 50808

# Traveller Community Development Organisations

Counties Cork and Kerry have a network of independent, Traveller-led, community-development organisations working for Traveller human rights, promoting health and responding to the needs of the community. These organisations employ both Traveller and settled workers in a range of roles:



## **Cork Traveller Women's Network**

Tel. 086 7777651 / 086 3850136

Email: [corktravellerwomen@hotmail.com](mailto:corktravellerwomen@hotmail.com)



## **East Cork Travellers (Cumann Na Daoine)**

Tel. 024 91900 / 085 2853446 / 087 1196234

Email: [jsheehancumannnadoine@gmail.com](mailto:jsheehancumannnadoine@gmail.com)  
[amyeastcorktrav@gmail.com](mailto:amyeastcorktrav@gmail.com)



## **Kerry Traveller Health Development Project**

Tel. 066 7120054

Email: [projectmanagerkthcdp@gmail.com](mailto:projectmanagerkthcdp@gmail.com)



## **Travellers of North Cork**

Tel. 022 71035

Email: [travellersnorthcork@live.com](mailto:travellersnorthcork@live.com)



## **Traveller Visibility Group, Cork**

Tel. 021 4503786

Email: [tvgcork@gmail.com](mailto:tvgcork@gmail.com)



## **West Cork Travellers Centre**

Tel. 023 8835039

Email: [wctcmail@gmail.com](mailto:wctcmail@gmail.com)



## **Healthy Minds Traveller Suicide and Mental Health Project**

The project is a joint initiative between the two Traveller organisations in Cork City, the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) and Cork Traveller Women's Network (CTWN); and the HSE Traveller Health Unit. It is funded by the Social Inclusion in the HSE. Their work includes one to one support, crisis support, outreach, group work and delivery of awareness raising programmes.

Tel. 021 4928381 / 087 7590050

Email: [John.walsh2@hse.ie](mailto:John.walsh2@hse.ie)



## **HSE Mental Health Services Coordinator for Travellers Cork/ Kerry**

This is a Traveller specific service based in mental health services Cork/ Kerry. The service supports improved access to mental health services to meet the needs of Travellers. It coordinates the projects to help improve collaboration with mental health services to reduce the high rate of suicide and mental health distress within the Traveller community.

Tel. 021 4923575 / 087 9573384

Email: [mhscorkkerry@hse.ie](mailto:mhscorkkerry@hse.ie)



**CK** CÚRAM SLÁNTE POBAIL  
**CORCAIGH CIARRAÍ**  
**CORK KERRY**  
 COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE



Connecting for Life

**yourmentalhealth**  
 Information | Support | Services



Cork/Kerry Traveller  
 Mental Health

