

# Report on the Look-Back Review into Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services - South Kerry

January 2022

Frequently  
Asked  
Questions

for young people and their families

***Why am I getting this letter and these documents?***

We wrote to you earlier last year to let you know that we (the HSE) were reviewing the treatment received by children and young people who attended the South Kerry Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) between July 2016 and April 2021.

The review found that 240 young people did not receive the standard of care which they should have received. You (or your child) are one of these 240 young people.

After your file was reviewed, we invited you to meet with a senior manager and a senior clinician.

At that meeting we:

- apologised to you because the care which you (or your child) received was not of the standard which it should have been.
- explained to you what the issues were with the care which you received (or which your child received) and if required what should happen next.

After the meeting, we wrote to you to give you the detail of what was said at the meeting.

Dr Sean Maskey, an external and independent CAMHS consultant psychiatrist from the UK led the review. He has written a full report into what happened and why it happened.

We are writing to you to let you know that the report will be published very shortly on [www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/](http://www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/)

As this is a long report, an easy-read version of the report's summary is at the same webpage, [www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/](http://www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/)

***What exactly happened?***

Along with this document, you will find the executive summary of Dr Sean Maskey's report which explains what happened.

You can access the full report at [www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/](http://www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/)

An easy-read version of the report summary is also at [www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/](http://www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/)

For 240 young people, the review found concerns about the diagnosis and/or the medical treatments offered to them and/or the management of documentation and notes.

The review found that harm was caused to some young people.

The harm included:

- issues with diagnoses
- medication inappropriately prescribed, and failure to adequately monitor for side effects such as weight gain, sleepiness, not growing as people should have, difficulties concentrating in school, mood changes.
- Problems with missing documentation which meant that children weren't followed up as they should have been.

In any case where harm was caused to someone, this was explained at our meetings. In other words if harm was caused in your case, this was outlined to you at the meeting in late 2021.

In some cases, the issues found with the treatment offered to the child or young person had already been resolved when we met with the young person. In other cases, some further follow-up was needed and this follow-up has either been arranged or is being arranged.

At your meeting with us, we apologised to you because the care you got did not meet the standard which it should have. We are repeating that apology sincerely now.

***Is there any one person responsible?***

The review outlines in detail what happened, and makes it clear that there were a number of failures at a number of levels which allowed this situation to occur and to continue for a period of time.

The full review can be read at [www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/](http://www.hse.ie/southkerrycamhsreview/)

As well as apologising sincerely, we are doing everything possible to prevent this from reoccurring.

Dr Maskey makes 35 recommendations in his report. We have already started to implement some of these recommendations and we will implement all of the recommendations as soon as possible. A specific implementation team chaired by the Chief Officer will oversee that full implementation.

***What did the review find about me/my child?***

We offered meetings to the 240 young people affected. At these meetings, we explained in detail what the review found about each person individually. We also apologised to each person or family member that attended.

A small number of people did not answer us when we offered them a meeting. If you are one of these people and would like to discuss this further, you can contact the South Kerry CAMHS Review information line on **1800 742 800**

***What might this mean for me or my child in the long-term?***

This would already have been discussed with you and we would have written to you about this.

We entirely understand that you and your child may have very real fears and concerns.

We hope these were addressed at your meeting with us last year.

It is also understandable that you may still have specific questions, and you can contact the South Kerry CAMHS Review information line on **1800 742 800** if you need more information.

If you are still involved with CAMHS or adult mental health services, you could also discuss this at your next appointment.

<p><b><i>Is there anything I could have done to prevent this?</i></b></p>	<p>During our meetings, many parents, guardians and young people told us that they felt they should have done something different during their treatment.</p> <p>We want to be very clear that there is nothing that any child, young person, parent or guardian should have done differently. You put your faith in our service, and you did not receive the service which you expected, and which you were entitled to expect. We are sorry that this is the case.</p> <p>The report makes it clear that while there were many reasons for the failings, none of the fault lies with a young person or family member.</p> <p>It is very important to us to stress this and we understand that we need to work to rebuild trust between you and the service.</p>
<p><b><i>Was I told about this as soon as I could have been?</i></b></p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Concerns were first raised by a new member of staff in September 2020. Following this, we immediately carried out a sample audit of files, and this informed our decision to carry out a full review. That full review started in April 2021.</p> <p>We did not wait for the outcome of this full review to let people know about problems.</p> <p>If the review team found something which they were very worried about, they arranged for South Kerry CAMHS to contact the young person (or their parents or guardian) straight away. They did not wait until they finished reviewing all the files. This means that if they were worried about any child or young person, that young person is now receiving the appropriate care.</p> <p>The entire review process took longer than we wished, and we apologise that you were waiting for the final report.</p>
<p><b><i>Why is the HSE apologising?</i></b></p>	<p>The care received by 240 young people under the care of South Kerry CAMHS did not meet the standard it should have.</p> <p>Everyone using our services is entitled to expect a certain standard. Where we don't meet these standards, or where harm is caused, it is important that we let people know as quickly as possible and that we say sorry.</p> <p>We have apologised to these young people, and we are now apologising publicly.</p> <p>Teams of senior managers and senior clinicians have met with any of the 240 young people affected who wished to have a meeting. One of the themes which struck them was the fact that some parents and guardians felt that they should have done something different. We need to stress very strongly that there is nothing they should have done, and that we are apologising for the shortcomings in their care.</p>
<p><b><i>What happens next – will there be any more follow-up?</i></b></p>	<p>If you have any other questions, you can discuss them at your next appointment with CAMHS, or any other mental health services that you are involved with.</p> <p>You could also discuss any questions about your mental health with your GP. If you have questions about the review process, you can contact the South Kerry CAMHS Review information line on 1800 742 800.</p>

<p><b><i>I don't feel well right now/my child isn't well right now – what should I do?</i></b></p>	<p>If you are in crisis, or your child is in crisis, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talk to your GP</li> <li>• if you are a South Kerry CAMHS service user, you can contact the team directly.</li> <li>• If you are an adult Mental Health Services service user, you can contact your team directly.</li> <li>• contact SouthDoc if your GP is not open</li> <li>• go to the nearest emergency department</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>I am upset and I feel I need support</i></b></p>	<p>You can contact the South Kerry CAMHS Review information line freephone <b><u>1800 742 800</u></b>.</p> <p>It is usually open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, but the opening hours will be extended for a period after the publication of the report.</p> <p>If you are in crisis, or your child is in crisis, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talk to your GP</li> <li>• if you are a South Kerry CAMHS service user, you can contact the team directly.</li> <li>• If you are an adult Mental Health Services service user, you can contact your team directly.</li> <li>• contact SouthDoc if your GP is not open</li> <li>• go to the nearest emergency department</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>What should I do now?</i></b></p>	<p>We hope that the meeting with our managers and senior clinicians was useful.</p> <p>If you or your child is still engaged with the CAMHS service, or any other mental health service, we ask you to keep coming to appointments as normal.</p> <p>If you did not attend the meeting which we arranged for you recently, then we can arrange another one for you. Please contact the South Kerry CAMHS Review information line on <b><u>1800 742 800</u></b>.</p>
<p><b><i>Should I change or stop medications now?</i></b></p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Please do not stop taking your medication (or do not allow your child to stop taking medication) without first talking to your prescribing doctor.</p>
<p><b><i>Could this have been prevented, and could this happen again?</i></b></p>	<p>Dr Maskey's report makes it clear that there were a number of reasons for the failures.</p> <p>It also makes it clear what we need to do in future to prevent an incident like this reoccurring. We will make sure that all the recommendations in the report are implemented.</p> <p>It is very difficult for us to say for definite if this could have been prevented, but we can say that it should not have happened and we are very sorry.</p>
<p><b><i>Has this ever happened elsewhere?</i></b></p>	<p>We cannot speak for other parts of the HSE outside of Cork and Kerry.</p> <p>Dr Sean Maskey's report has outlined the problems which he found. He has made recommendations and in the interests of shared learning, the executive summary and recommendations will be shared with other CAMHS services around the country.</p>

***Is the South Kerry CAMHS service safe right now?***

We take this report very seriously, and we welcome it because it shows us where we need to make changes.

We are going to work as hard as we can to bring about the changes which Dr Sean Maskey told us need to happen.

Since the review started, there are many things which have changed at South Kerry CAMHS, even before this report.

For example:

- There are more doctors working in the service.
- A consultant doctor from another CAMHS service is providing extra cover.
- A clinical co-ordinator is in place to help with daily workings of the service.
- There are more staff to make sure the administrative side of the service runs smoothly.

We will continue to do everything in our power to employ a permanent consultant to the service, though this has proved very difficult to achieve over the past number of years.