



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
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Deputy Jenifer Whitmore.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

7th February 2024

PQ Number: 49475/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will extend CAMHS services to include children who have ADS; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jennifer Whitmore

Dear Deputy Whitmore,

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.

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

As per the CAMHS Operational Guideline (2019), children or adolescents referred to community CAMHS must fulfil the following criteria:

- The child or adolescent is under 18 years old
- Consent for the referral has been obtained from the parent(s)
- The child or adolescent presents with a suspected moderate to severe mental disorder
- Comprehensive treatment at primary care level has been unsuccessful or was not appropriate in the first instance

The CAMHS Operational Guidelines (2019), clearly set out the type of referrals suitable for CAMHS and the types of referrals not suitable for CAMHS. These are listed below.

Types of Referrals Suitable for CAMHS

The list below gives some guidance on what constitutes a **moderate to severe mental disorder**. However, it is important to note that the CAMHS Operational Guideline is not a clinical guideline, therefore not all children or young person will fit neatly into a diagnostic category:

- Moderate to severe Anxiety disorders.
- Moderate to severe Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder/ Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD/ADD).
- Moderate to severe Depression.
- Bipolar Affective Disorder.



- Psychosis.
- Moderate to severe Eating Disorder.
- Suicidal ideation in the context of a mental disorder.

Moderate to Severe Mental Disorders

Mental disorders are often described on a continuum of severity, ranging from mild to moderate to severe. A number of factors are taken into account when defining whether someone has a moderate to severe mental disorder and these include the diagnosis, formulation, the duration of the symptoms and level of functioning in daily living. » In practice the term moderate to severe means that the mental disorder is severe enough to cause substantial distress to the child or their family or others. The child or adolescent would have a significant impairment in functioning in various aspects of their life including development, family relationships, school, peers, self-care and play or leisure activities.

The mental health disorder associated with the primary diagnosis of autism.

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, appearing to read 'Paul Braham', written over a horizontal line.

Paul Braham
Senior Operations Manager (Area DON)
National Mental Health Services