



Deputy Pauline Tully.  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

14<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**PQ Number: 48511/23**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the general wait time for accessing CAMHS, by county; and the wait time for those who have an autism diagnosis accessing CAMHS, by county, in tabular form. -Pauline Tully**

Dear Deputy Tully,

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.

CAMHS provide specialist mental health service 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 a multi-disciplinary mental health teams.

Due to the ongoing FORSA industrial action, the table below provides the latest available information on the number of children and young people waiting to be seen by CAMHS as at end of **August 2023**. Please be advised that this data is preliminary and subject to change and amendment pending ongoing review and validation. Age range is not captured.

Aug 2023	Total waiting to be seen	<= 12 weeks No.	> 12 <= 26 weeks No.	>26 <=39 weeks No.	>39 <=52 Weeks No.	>52 Weeks No.
<b>National Total</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>1,401</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>656</b>
CHO 1	294	122	86	46	35	5
CHO 2	233	79	51	34	30	39
CHO 3	297	87	82	46	19	63
CHO 4	937	215	164	122	88	348
CHO 5	254	76	65	44	32	37
CHO 6	604	259	157	118	48	22
CHO 7	417	203	119	49	19	27
CHO 8	695	285	150	73	72	115
CHO 9	160	75	67	17	1	0



### **Referral and Access to CAMHS**

It is the role of the CAMHS team to determine if the child or adolescent reaches the threshold for specialist CAMHS services i.e. whether the child or young persons mental disorder is moderate to severe. The CAMHS Operational Guidelines clearly set out the types of Referrals Not Suitable for CAMHS. These are listed below.

### **Types of Referrals Not Suitable for CAMHS**

CAMHS is not suitable for children or adolescents whose difficulties primarily are related to learning problems, social problems, behavioural problems or mild mental health problems. There are many services available to respond to these needs for children and adolescents, e.g. HSE Primary Care Services, HSE Disability Services, Tusla – The Child and Family Agency, Jigsaw, National Educational Psychology Services (NEPS) and local Family Resource Centres.

CAMHS does not accept the following children or adolescents where there is no evidence of a moderate to severe mental disorder present:

- Those with an intellectual disability. Their diagnostic and support needs are best met in HSE Social Care/HSE Disability Services. However those children or adolescents with a mild intellectual disability with moderate to severe mental disorder are appropriate to be seen by CAMHS.
- Those with a moderate to severe intellectual disability and moderate to severe mental disorder. Their needs are best met by CAMHS Mental Health Intellectual Disability (MHID) teams.
- Those whose presentation is a developmental disorder. Examples of these could include Dyslexia or Developmental Coordination Disorder. Their needs are best met in HSE Primary Care services and/or Children's Disability Network Teams.
- Those who require assessments or interventions that relate to educational needs. Their needs are best met in services such as Children's Disability Network Teams or the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS).
- Those who present with child protection or welfare issues where there is no moderate to severe mental disorder present. Their needs are best met by Tusla – The Child and Family Agency.
- Those who have a diagnosis of Autism. Their needs are best met in services such as HSE Primary Care and/or Children's Disability Network Teams. Where the child or adolescent presents with a moderate to severe mental disorder and autism, it is the role of CAMHS to provide appropriate multi-disciplinary mental health assessment and treatment for the mental disorder. This may involve joint working or shared care with other agencies including HSE Primary Care, Children's Disability Network Teams, and other agencies supporting children and adolescents.

Nationally the HSE does not collect separate wait time data for children or young persons with an autism diagnosis and a moderate to severe mental disorder.

Further information on referral and access to CAMHS 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 be 'Paul Braham', written in a cursive style.

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