



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
Baile Átha Cliath 20, D20 HK69

Office of the
Assistant National Director
Mental Health Operations

St Lomans Hospital, Palmerstown,
Dublin 20, D20 HK69

www.hse.ie
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

t: 01-6207304

e: PQReps.NatMHOPS@hse.ie

Deputy Stephen Matthews
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

DATE 02/05/2024

PQ Number: 6114/24

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the position regarding the review of CAMHS at a national level; if a county review of Wicklow is ongoing; if so, what findings can be reported at this stage; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Steven Matthews

Dear Deputy Matthews,

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 on the matter. There have been a significant number of National Reviews and Audits of CAMHS in recent years the detail of which have been outlined below.

[Maskey Report 2022](#)

In January 2022, the HSE published the [Report on the Look-Back Review into CAMHS in South Kerry](#) (Maskey Report). Conducted in accordance with the 'HSE Incident Management Framework' (2020), and the 'HSE Look-Back Review Process Guideline'(2015), the purpose of the review was to consider potential issues relating to the clinical practice of a Non-Consultant Hospital Doctor (NCHD) with regard to prescribing, care planning, diagnostics and clinical supervision between 1 July 2016 and 19 April 2021.

As announced by An Taoiseach 27/02/22, three national CAMHS audits have been undertaken in response to the Maskey Report. These include a review of prescribing practice, an audit of adherence to the COG and qualitative research into lived experiences of those using CAMHS.

[Audit of CAMHS prescribing practice](#)

An independent expert team conducted a national review of prescribing practice in CAMHS. The expert team was administratively supported by the HSEs National Centre for Clinical Audit and Community Operations. The final Audit report was published on the HSE website on the 28th July 2023. The national audit commenced in July 2022 and has achieved a 100% response rate from community CAMHS teams.



The audit did not find evidence of overprescribing or problems with polypharmacy. For all but one of the standards measured, compliance exceeded 90%. Most patients (95%) had their medication prescribed by a consultant or in consultation with a consultant and most patients (98%) had documented follow-up appointments/plans. Areas noted for improvement are baseline physical assessment (90%) and ongoing monitoring (92%), consent procedures (89%) and communication with GPs (90%). Only 5.3% were on more than one medication where 70% were only on one medication. At the end of December 2021, of the 3,193-cohort sample, over half were on ADHD medication, 42% on antidepressants and only 11% on antipsychotics. Findings will provide a baseline for ongoing quality improvement and learning, both nationally and at CHO level, and within individual CAMHS teams.

On the basis of audit findings, the expert team has made a number of recommendations, which have been accepted by the HSEs National Oversight Group, including the:

- Immediate implementation of a national software for patient records in CAMHS.
- Development of national guidelines for prescribing psychotropic medication.
- Formation of a National Drugs and Therapeutics Committee and conducting ongoing / additional audits

[Audit of compliance with the COG](#)

Published in 2019, the COG sets out best practice for the pathway and service delivery for those requiring the support of CAMHS. It builds on the '*CAMHS Standard Operating Procedure*' (2015) and was developed following an extensive review and consultation process that took into consideration the views of service users, family members, front line staff, management and partner organisations.

An audit of compliance with the COG has been completed and there was a 100% response rate from all CAMHS Teams and the report was completed in Q1 2024. The findings indicate that the vast majority of teams understand their roles and responsibilities and are in the process of implementing the COG. Twelve teams currently have a dedicated team coordinator, while 89% of files reviewed have an assigned key worker. The key barriers for adherence to the COG have been reported as staffing, lack of ICT infrastructure and team capacity and resources, including team coordination.

Building on audit findings, the report makes a number of recommendations, which will be incorporated into the HSEs child and youth mental health improvement programme.

Recommendations include

- Development of quality improvement plans for each CHO
- Internal audit framework and processes
- Recruitment of key personnel
- Progressing a fit for purpose ICT infrastructure and instigating a review of the COG

A number of these recommendations are already part of existing service improvement programmes and reflected in the Sharing the Vision (StV) 2022 – 2024 Implementation Plan.



These areas will, subject to funding, be addressed as part of the HSEs Child & Youth Mental Health Action Plan alongside CHO specific quality improvement plans. The CAMHS Operational Guidelines are due for review in 2024 in line with the HSEs PPPG framework and the feedback and detail collected from this audit will be used to update the document.

[Qualitative Research of CAMHS Experiences](#)

UCC has been engaged as an academic partner to conduct qualitative research into CAMHS experiences. This research involves a qualitative study of CAMHS experiences in order to determine the lived experience of service users, families and carers, staff, referrers and other key stakeholders interacting with the CAMHS service. The research has been completed and the final report is expected to be published in Q2, 2024.

[Mental Health Commission Final Report on CAMHS](#)

In February 2022, the Inspector of Mental Health Services commenced her review of CAMHS provision. Following publication of an [Interim Report 23/01/23](#), the Mental Health Commission (MHC) published their [Final Report on 26/07/23](#) as well as the CHO reports. Their final report outlines a total of 49 recommendations.

[HSE Child and Youth Mental Health Office](#)

The HSE has established a new National Office for Child and Youth Mental Health in September 2023. This office has responsibility for the Child and Youth Mental Health Service Improvement Programme nationally. It will also provide leadership, operational oversight and enhanced governance. As part of this initiative, a National Clinical Lead and an Assistant National Director for Child and Youth Mental Health have been appointed.

The HSE has been mapping and cross-referencing the recommendations from all of the CAMHS reports outlined above and have consolidated them into a national Service Improvement Plan. Many of the recommendations are already being progressed under work streams arising from the Sharing the Vision (StV) Implementation Plan, the Maskey Report, the COG audit and the national audit of prescribing practice.

As outlined above there have been a significant number of national reviews of CAMHS ongoing in the last number of years which includes the CHO 6 Area, however there is no specific County review of Wicklow that we are aware of in the HSE.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah Hennessy'.

Sarah Hennessy
General Manager
Child & Youth Mental Health