



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
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Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

07th February 2024

PQ Number: 4643/24

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health his views on whether CAMHS teams should continue to govern themselves independently; his future plans for further cohesion, oversight and accountability from his Department over CAMHS teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter Violet- Anne Wynne

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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.

Governance in Mental Health Services

The HSE's Performance and Accountability Framework (2020) sets out the means by which accountable officers within the HSE are held to account for their performance, ensuring that the system has clear authority, responsibilities and accountability structures. In line with this framework, and as directed by the Health Service Executive (Governance) Act 2019, the relevant accountability structure in respect of mental health services is outlined below

1	Service Managers to CHO Chief Officers
2	CHO Chief Officers to the National Director Community Operations
3	National Director Community Operations to the Chief Operations Officer
4	The Chief Operations Officer to the Chief Executive Officer
5	The Chief Executive Officer to the Board
6	The Board to the Minister

Chapter 3 of the CAMHS Operational Guideline (<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/camhs-operational-guideline-2019.pdf>) (2019), sets out the Clinical Governance Structures in relation to HSE Mental Health Services. Clinical governance is a framework through which healthcare teams are held accountable for the quality, safety and satisfaction of service users when delivering care. Clinical governance involves having the necessary structures, processes, standards, and oversight in place to ensure that safe, person-centered and effective services are delivered.

In each Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO), the Chief Officer has overall accountability for mental health services provided within that area and is supported in this role by a management team. The Chief Officer in each CHO area works in partnership with the Head of Service for Mental



Health, the Executive Clinical Director/Clinical Director, the Director of Nursing, and the Health and Social Care Professional Leads to ensure that clinical governance structures are in place. This means that there are clear lines of accountability, responsibility and authority to oversee quality and safety in mental health services.

Each CAMHS team has clear accountability structures in place to achieve the delivery of high-quality, safe and reliable services (*Best Practice Guidance for Mental Health Services: Supporting you to meet Regulatory Requirements and towards Continuous Quality Improvement, 2017*), and all staff should be informed of this as part of their induction process. There is a clear management structure which includes corporate and clinical governance responsibilities and reporting relationships. The Consultant Psychiatrist is the Clinical Lead on the team. Each member of the CAMHS team also has a Professional and management reporting relationship through their discipline-specific line management structure.

In addition each member of a CAMHS team has the professional responsibility to carry out clinical work with children and adolescents within their scope of practice, as defined by their professional and regulatory bodies such as the Medical Council, the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU), the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). Each individual CAMHS team member knows their responsibility, level of authority and to whom they are accountable. Each individual CAMHS team member seeks to demonstrate how the principles of quality and safety can be applied in their diverse practice to pursue improved outcomes for children, young persons' and their families.

In terms of enhancing governance within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, a new National Child and Youth Mental Health Office was established in September 2023 with the recruitment of a dedicated Assistant National Director (A.N.D.) and a National Clinical Lead for Child and Youth Mental Health. This office will provide leadership, operational oversight, governance and delegated management of all service delivery and improvement in youth mental health services in Ireland.

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 and Youth Mental Health Office