College of Psychiatrists of Ireland response to publication of the HSE report into CAMHS services in North Kerry region

Thursday 19th February 2026.

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland welcomes the publication of the HSE review into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in North Kerry (CAMHS Area B Look Back Review Phase 1 Report on the Recall Stage of the Look Back Review carried out by Dr Colette Halpin and pertaining to all cases that were open to the service as of November 21st, 2022). At the heart of the report are children who did not receive the standard of care they were entitled to. Their experiences must remain central to any learnings taken from the review.

The report, which found young people experienced harm or were at risk of harm, provides further evidence of the systemic failures of HSE oversight and governance within parts of the CAMHS system, and notes a lack of resourcing across a range of services in the area. Where there are deficits in resourcing, failures in accountability, and inadequate oversight of services, the risk to patients increases.

Since the publication and recommendations of the Maskey Report in 2022 (a look back review into South Kerry CAMHS) and the Mental Health Commission Inspector's independent review into CAMHS nationwide (2023 and 2024), there has been greater awareness of the need for urgent change within the CAMHS system. Central to the recommendations from these reports are the need for increased and appropriate resourcing and funding for CAMHS; improved planning, delivery and oversight of CAMHS; and equity of access and service provision across the country. These recommendations have been accepted by all as essential to rebuild trust for patients, families and the CAMHS teams.

It is important to recognise that change has been initiated by the Minister for Mental Health, Ms Mary Butler and the HSE NCAGL in recent years, and an action plan to respond to areas of identified need has been developed. However, essential requirements, including minimum multidisciplinary staffing of CAMHS to facilitate a holistic range of therapeutic interventions, and provision of the minimum required infrastructure to deliver services, such as fit for purpose IT systems, are still outstanding. Further development of systems to improve accountability, audit, service development and interagency working with other services are vital.

In March 2025, the College launched a detailed proposal setting out a new model of governance and management structures required for CAMHS in Ireland. This model outlines clearer frameworks for service delivery and enhancement, decision making, and accountability to ensure

psychiatrists and the multi-disciplinary teams can deliver evidence-based care in a collaborative, safe environment for patients and practitioners alike. The College reiterates its call for the full implementation of its recommendations as a matter of urgency.

While good work has been done, this report underscores how much more remains to be achieved. Those who need the support of CAMHS and the teams committed to providing the best for patients and families deserve no less.

The College remains committed to working with Government, service providers and families to ensure that CAMHS services are fit for purpose.

ENDS

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