



North Kerry CAMHS

Lookback Review

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



FSS an Iardheiscirt
HSE South West

Why am I getting this letter and these documents?

We wrote to you previously to let you know that we (the HSE) were reviewing the treatment received by children and young people who were attending the North Kerry Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) on 21st November 2022.

The review found that 197 young people did not receive the standard of care which they should have received. You (or your child) are one of these 197 young people.

After your file was reviewed, we invited you to meet with a senior manager and a senior clinician.

At that meeting we:

- apologised to you because the care which you (or your child) received was not of the standard which it should have been.
- explained to you what the issues were with the care which you received (or which your child received) and if required what should happen next.

After the meeting, we wrote to you to give you the detail of what was said at the meeting.

Dr Colette Halpin, an experienced external and independent CAMHS consultant psychiatrist, who has worked in Ireland and Australia, led the review. The Serious Incident Management Team has written a full report into what happened and why it happened, including the findings and recommendations of Dr Halpin following the review.

We are writing to you to let you know that the report will be published this week on www.hse.ie/northkerrycamhsreview/

What exactly happened?

You can access the full report at www.hse.ie/northkerrycamhsreview/

For 197 young people, the review found concerns about the diagnosis and/or the medical treatments offered to them and/or the management of documentation and notes.

The review found that potential harm was caused to some young people. The harm included:

- deficits and gaps in physical health baseline assessment or ongoing monitoring for side effects of medications prescribed such as weight gain, sleepiness, slowed growth, difficulties concentrating in school and mood changes.
- lack of timely intervention with evidence-based psychotherapeutic treatments

In any case where harm was caused to someone, this was explained at our meetings. In other words, if harm was caused in your case, this was outlined to you at your Open Disclosure meeting. We want to reassure you that if you have not been invited to an Open Disclosure meeting, that means that we are not concerned that harm was caused to you.

In some cases, the issues found with the treatment offered to the child or young person had already been resolved when we met with the young person. In other cases, some further follow-up was needed and this follow-up has been arranged.

At your meeting with us, we apologised to you because the care you got did not meet the standard which it should have. We are repeating that apology sincerely now.

Is there any one person responsible?

The review outlines in detail what happened, and makes it clear that there were a number of failures at a number of levels which allowed this situation to occur and to continue for a period of time.

The full review can be read at
www.hse.ie/northkerrycamhsreview/

As well as apologising sincerely, we are doing everything possible to prevent this from reoccurring.

Dr Halpin makes 61 recommendations in her report. We have already started to implement some of these recommendations and we will implement all of the recommendations as soon as possible. Many of the recommendations have been acted on even before the report was published, due to the ongoing improvements being made at North Kerry CAMHS.

What did the review find about me/my child?

We offered meetings to the 197 young people affected. At these meetings, we explained in detail what the review found about each person individually. We also apologised to each person or family member that attended.

A small number of people did not attend their Open Disclosure meeting, as is their right. They were offered at least four opportunities to attend Open Disclosure meetings.

If you were offered Open Disclosures meetings and did not attend, and would now like to discuss this further, you can contact the **Kerry CAMHS information line on 1800 700 700**

What might this mean for me or my child in the long- term?

We entirely understand that you and your child may have very real fears and concerns.

We hope these were addressed at your meeting with us. At that meeting, we discussed any possible long term impacts, and we also wrote to you after the meeting.

We understand that you may still have specific questions, and you can contact the **Kerry CAMHS information line on 1800 700 700** if you need more information.

If you are still involved with CAMHS or adult mental health services, you could also discuss this at your next appointment.

Is there anything I could have done to prevent this?

During our meetings, many parents, guardians and young people told us that they felt they should have done something different during their treatment.

We want to be very clear that there is nothing that any child, young person, parent or guardian should have done differently. You put your faith in our service, and you did not receive the service which you expected, and which you were entitled to expect. We are sorry that this is the case.

The report makes it clear that while there were many reasons for the failings, none of the fault lies with a young person or family member.

It is very important to us to stress this and we understand that we need to work to rebuild trust between you and the service.

Was I told about this as soon as I could have been?

Yes.

Concerns were first raised in 2022. Following this, we carried out a sample audit of files in 2022, and this informed our decision to carry out a full review. That full review started in May 2023.

We did not wait for the outcome of this full review to let people know about problems.

If the review team found something which they were very worried about, they arranged for North Kerry CAMHS to contact the young person (or their parents or guardian) straight away. They did not wait until they finished reviewing all the files. This means that if they were worried about any child or young person, that young person is now receiving the appropriate care.

Teams of senior managers and senior clinicians have met with the 197 young people affected who wished to have a meeting. These were called Open Disclosure meetings.

The entire review process took longer than we wished, and we apologise that you were waiting for the final report.

Why is the HSE apologising?

The care received by 197 young people under the care of North Kerry CAMHS did not meet the standard it should have.

Everyone using our services is entitled to expect a certain standard. Where we don't meet these standards, or where harm is caused, it is important that we let people know as quickly as possible and that we say sorry.

We have apologised to these young people, and we are now apologising publicly.

What happens next – will there be any more follow- up?

Following your Open Disclosure meeting, you were referred to the Clinical Liaison Support Team for support and follow up. They remain available to you and you can contact them on **064 6670700**.

If you have any other questions, you can discuss them at your next appointment with CAMHS, or any other mental health services that you are involved with.

You could also discuss any questions about your mental health with your GP. If you have questions about the review process, you can contact the **Kerry CAMHS information line on 1800 700 700 or 01 240 87 87** from Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm. It will also be open on Saturday from 9am to 5pm on Saturday February 21

I don't feel well right now/my child isn't well right now – what should I do?

If you are in crisis, or your child is in crisis, you can:

- talk to your GP
- if you are a North Kerry CAMHS service user, you can contact the team directly.
- If you are an adult Mental Health Services service user, you can contact your team directly.
- contact SouthDoc if your GP is not open
- go to the nearest emergency department

I am upset and I feel I need support

The Kerry CAMHS information line can be contacted on 1800 700 700 or 01 240 87 87 from Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm. It will also be open on Saturday from 9am to 5pm on **Saturday February 21**

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- talk to your GP
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What should I do now?

We hope that the meeting with our managers and senior clinicians was useful.

If you or your child is still engaged with the CAMHS service, or any other mental health service, we ask you to keep coming to appointments as normal.

If you did not attend your Open Disclosure meeting, then we can arrange another one for you. The **Kerry CAMHS information line** can be contacted on 1800 700 700 or 01 240 87 87 from Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm. It will also be open on Saturday from 9am to 5pm on Saturday February 21

Should I change or stop medications now?

No.

Please do not stop taking your medication (or do not allow your child to stop taking medication) without first talking to your prescribing doctor.

Could this have been prevented, and could this happen again?

Dr Halpin's report makes it clear that there were a number of reasons for the failures.

It also makes it clear what we need to do in future to prevent an incident like this reoccurring. We will make sure that all the recommendations in the report are implemented.

It is very difficult for us to say for definite if this could have been prevented, but we can say that it should not have happened and we are very sorry.

Has this ever happened elsewhere?

We cannot speak for other parts of the HSE outside of Cork and Kerry.

The Look Back Review Report has outlined the issues at North Kerry CAMHS. In the interests of shared learning, the recommendations from the report of the Look Back review will be shared with other CAMHS services around the country.

Is the North Kerry CAMHS service safe right now?

We take this report very seriously, and we welcome it because it shows us where we need to make changes.

We are going to work as hard as we can to bring about the changes which Dr Colette Halpin told us need to happen.

Since the review started, there are many things which have changed at North Kerry CAMHS, even before this report.

For example:

- There are more doctors working in the service.
- A Clinical Coordinator and a Practice Manager are in place to help with daily workings of the service.
- There are more staff to make sure the administrative side of the service runs smoothly.

We will continue to do everything in our power to employ a permanent consultant to the service, though this has proved very difficult to achieve over the past number of years.

What to do if you need support



The **Kerry CAMHS information line** can be contacted on **1800 700 700** or **01 240 87 87** from Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm. It will also be open on Saturday from 9am to 5pm on **Saturday February 21**



If you are in crisis, contact the team or your GP.



If it's out of hours and you cannot contact the team or your GP, contact **South Doc on 0818 355 999** or a hospital emergency department.



Any updates will be available on hse.ie/northkerrycamhsreview





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