



**Opening Statement of St Patrick's Mental Health Services
to the
Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health Care**

April 18th 2018

Good afternoon. My name is Aileen Murtagh and I am a Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist in St Patrick's Mental Health Services and formerly worked as a Consultant in HSE CAMHS in North Dublin and Celbridge, Co Kildare. I am accompanied today by Carol McCormack, Clinical Nurse Manager III in Willow Grove Adolescent Inpatient Unit. We welcome the opportunity to respond to your invitation to provide information on the operation of the adolescent mental health services in St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS).

St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS)

SPMHS consists of three approved centres with a total inpatient capacity of 293 adult and 14 adolescent beds. Community mental health services are provided by a network of Dean Clinics in Dublin, Galway and Cork. A range of day programmes and a day service are provided for adults in St Patrick's University Hospital and St Edmundsbury Hospital, Lucan. The service works towards provision of the highest quality mental health care, promotion of mentally health living, development of mental health awareness, advocating for the rights of those experiencing mental health difficulties, and enhancement of evidence-based knowledge.

Adolescent Inpatient Service

The adolescent inpatient unit, Willow Grove, constitutes a 14-bedded in-patient unit which provides specialist multi-disciplinary evidence-based care to young people aged 12 to 17 years. It accepts referrals nationally and offers intensive inpatient management for a range of severe mental health difficulties including mood, anxiety and psychotic disorders, often with associated suicidality and self-harming behavior. There are specific Eating Disorder Recovery Programmes for Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. Young people may have associated neurodevelopmental difficulties including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Each young person has an individual care plan which is reviewed weekly by the multi-disciplinary team and discussed with the young person, ensuring an individualized person-centered package of care. Service quality is assessed by annual inspections by the Mental Health Commission and Quality Network for Inpatient CAMHS (QNIC). In September 2017 electronic health records eSwift were introduced to the adolescent service.

National Context

The Mental Health Commission Annual Report 2016 highlighted 68 admissions of children to 19 adult units in 2016. A contributory factor was a shortage of operational beds in dedicated child units. In 2016, there were 76 registered beds in HSE child units, with 66 of these operational. Of those operational beds, the average monthly rate of bed occupancy ranged from 24% to 100%. A Vision for Change recommends 118 child and adolescent inpatient beds based on the 2011 census population data. A small number of children are sent by the HSE to the UK annually for highly specialised in-patient treatment which is currently not available in Ireland.

Adolescent Community Service

As part of the Willow Grove service there is also a part-time adolescent community service, the Dean Clinic in Lucan, which offers outpatient care to young people 12-17 years with mild/moderate mental health difficulties. Assessment and a range of evidence-based therapeutic interventions are offered, including Cognitive Behavioural therapy (CBT), supportive psychotherapy, psychiatric review, pharmacotherapy, family support, dietician advice, occupational therapy and a Psychology Skills Group based on Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) concepts. There is also a sub-specialist outpatient service

offering assessment of gender identity. In addition there is an adolescent Dean Clinic in Cork offering psychiatric input and individual CBT.

Management of Referrals

All referrals are reviewed by the clinical team, including the consultant psychiatrist on the day of receipt. Similar to all services, inclusion and exclusion criteria are in operation based on expertise and available resources to ensure our service meets the needs of the young people. Due to the demand on our services, there is usually a waiting list in operation which can vary in length in accordance with service demand. Current waiting list for Dean Clinic Lucan is approximately 3-4 months. A new system was introduced in 2018 of a nurse-led Prompt Assessment of Need telephone triage to signpost the most appropriate service for the service user.

We have observed a number of trends:

- GPs concurrently refer to local HSE CAMHS and SPMHS outpatient services, requesting a service from the organization who can offer the most rapid appointment
- Increased number of referrals where young people are admitted to paediatric medical beds and can remain there for extended periods of times, sometimes weeks, whilst a suitable inpatient mental health bed is awaited.
- When public inpatient units are at capacity, CAMHS outpatient services refer concurrently to public and independent inpatient units, in the absence of private health insurance, with the HSE indicating a willingness to fund admission to SPMHS
- Increase in HSE-funded inpatient admissions to Willow Grove

Changing Minds Changing Lives Strategy 2018-2022

In the Changing Minds Changing Lives Strategy 2018-2022, an expansion of the Willow Grove Adolescent Service to 20 in-patient beds, development of a comprehensive day programme and enhancement of the work of the adolescent Dean Clinics is envisaged.

We hope this information is helpful and are happy to answer any questions.

Thank you.