

Joint Committee on Disability Matters

Opening Statement

David Walsh

National Director, Community Operations

15th November 2023



Good evening Chairperson and members. Thank you for the invitation to meet with the Joint Committee on Disability Matters to discuss a range of issues concerning Disability Services. I am joined by my colleague(s):

- Mr Bernard O'Regan, Head of Operations - Disability Services
- Mr Donan Kelly, Assistant National Director for Child and Youth Mental Health
- Dr Amanda Burke, Child & Adolescent Consultant Psychiatrist and National Clinical Lead for Child and Youth Mental Health
- Ms Martina Queally, Chief Officer, CHO Area 6

The role of the HSE is to provide a multi-disciplinary team based approach which includes the provision of health and personal supports required by children including children with disabilities incorporating Acute Hospital, CAMHS, Primary Care and other Community Services.

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children and Young People with Disability and Developmental Delay is designed to ensure that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting need. This may include Primary Care for non-complex issues, Children's Disability Network Teams for more complex issues and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services for other presenting issues. For a subset of children all three services may need to work in partnership to achieve best outcomes for the child.

The Final Report into CAMHS was published by the Mental Health Commission on July 26th of this year and the findings have been accepted by the HSE.

Together with the Maskey Report and the findings from HSE commissioned audits on prescribing practices, adherence to the CAMHS Operational Guidelines and service user experiences, these findings are directly contributing to the HSE's programme of work to improve services.

The Ombudsman for Children published his report *Children; Nowhere to Turn* in September of this year. The HSE acknowledges the finding in the report and, in response, is undertaking a series of actions to identify as early as possible, children whose discharge from hospital may be delayed and quickly identify and overcome any issues that may impact on their discharge.

These actions include;

1. A national audit of all children delayed in hospital to assess how current discharge processes are working and remedial actions.
2. A draft assessment framework titled *Guidance and Framework for the Case Management of Children with Complex Needs in Hospital Beyond Medical Need* has been developed and currently being considered for approval.
3. The Roadmap for Service Improvement for Children's Disability Network Teams has been published and is currently being actioned.
4. A national review of alternative care is underway and will be completed by year end.
5. A review of the HSE/TUSLA Joint Protocol is underway.

The HIQA Overview Report on Monitoring & Regulation of Disability Services in 2022 has now been published.

While the report reflects continued improvements in the quality and safety of disability residential and respite services, it also points to the need for each registered Provider to increase its focus on its governance and management of services.

Key learnings from this report in relation to disability services include:

- The need for continued attention by Registered Providers on Governance and management, including the importance of each Provider establishing the appropriate relationship between the Board and Executive team
- Congregated settings continue to show higher levels of non-compliance, emphasising the importance of progressing the decongregation policy
- The continued work required to ensure a human rights based approach to service delivery
- Legislative changes for to allow for emergency accommodation, an issue which will impact positively on the provision of residential services to children

The HSE will continue to engage with internal and external stakeholders including the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, TUSLA and others to promote the provision of high quality services for children with disabilities.

This concludes my Opening Statement.

Thank you.