

# **PE2148/A: Improve Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health Services transition**

## **Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport written submission 23 April 2025**

Thank you for writing to the Scottish Government, seeking its view of PE2148 - Improve Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to Adult Mental Health Services transition. I understand that this petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve the transition from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services by ensuring national referral guidelines and criteria are adhered to.

As the Committee will know, the Scottish Government is responsible for setting the overall policy direction of mental health services, and for working with and funding NHS Health Boards to ensure they plan and deliver appropriate local services. It is for local NHS Boards to decide how they implement these policies to ensure that their local population have the highest quality of care and treatment at the right time and in the right place.

In doing so, we expect Health Boards to consider and plan for transitions in services and care, including child to adult transitions in mental health care. The Scottish Government recognises that transitions between services can increase risks, especially for the most vulnerable. To support good transitions the Scottish Government has published guidance and service standards that support services to plan for transitions in care, and help young people and their families navigate transitions between services.

This includes the [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\) Service Specification](#), published by the Scottish Government in February 2020, which outlines provisions young people and their families can expect from the NHS. The specification sets out that all children and families should receive support and services that are appropriate to their needs.

The specification sets out an expectation that the Scottish Government's Transition Care Planning Guidance is implemented, and that CAMHS will have protocols in place to ensure that transitions between CAMHS and other services are robust. It recommends that, wherever possible, services work together with the child or young person and their family to plan in advance for transition, which is especially critical in the transfer from CAMHS to adult mental health services and primary care or other services, e.g. voluntary or third sector.

The specification also ensures that children, young people and their families will be able to access additional support which targets emotional distress through Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services. Community supports and services should work closely with CAMHS and relevant health and social care partners, children's services and educational establishments to ensure

that there are clear and streamlined pathways to support where that is more appropriately delivered by these services.

The supporting [Transition Care Plan \(TCP\) Guidance](#) and [Transition Care Plan Template](#) were developed with the Scottish Youth Parliament for young people, their families and clinicians to use to support transitions between child and adult services. They describe the standards required in the planning of good transitions for young people moving from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services, and ensure that the young person is involved in those discussions.

This approach also allows flexibility for those aged 18-25 to continue their care and treatment with CAMHS where this is in their best interests rather than automatic transfer to adult services. The National CAMHS Service Specification requires a robust TCP for those children and young people who are more at risk of adversity during transitions which should allow for flexibility for those aged 18-25 to continue their care and treatment with CAMHS where this is in their best interests.

To support and ensure ongoing improvement in the system, we have directly allocated £123.5 million to NHS Boards and IJBs for a new Enhanced Mental Health Outcomes Framework in 2024-25. The Framework provides a single, flexible funding stream to support continued improvements and better outcomes across a range of mental health and psychological services, including CAMHS and neurodevelopmental services, in line with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

It is also important to stress that CAMHS is a specialist service and will only be the right support for a small proportion of children and young people. Many will find more suitable support in their local community. This is why we have provided councils with over £65m since 2020 to fund these services. Local authorities report that, between July 2023 and March 2024, nearly 83,000 children, young people and family members accessed the community-based supports we funded. This investment will continue with the baselining of this funding into local authority General Revenue Grants from 2025-26. This investment will provide another opportunity to ensure that CAMHS to adults transitions can be supported in the people's local communities.

I appreciate that transitions for children in to adult services is an important matter that impacts many young people in Scotland and the committee may wish to note that more broadly, the Scottish Government are undertaking a review of various transition strategies which may have an effect on transitions from CAMHS to Adult Mental health Services. This includes the National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for young disabled people, and Moving On from care in to Adulthood work which forms part of our vital commitment to "Keep the Promise" for care experienced children and young people.

I hope this letter provides reassurances that we continue to review our transitions between CAMHS and Adult Mental health services, as well as the support available to children, young people and their families in their communities.

With best wishes,

**MAREE TODD MSP**