

Thursday 22 September 2022

Governance, data collection, risk and performance management for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services has been weak

Comptroller and Auditor General issues latest report

Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Lynn Pamment, has today, 22 September 2022, published a report on ***Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services***.

The report focusses on overall governance arrangements, service design, referrals management, service delivery, service resourcing, the effectiveness of commissioning and partnership arrangements, and performance management and oversight of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Lynn Pamment found that the Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy 2022-2025 (the Strategy) launched in February 2022 sets out a clear picture of what needs to be achieved and that the approach to developing the Strategy has been comprehensive, thorough and well governed. She also found that there are early signs that new ways of managing referrals and the evolving service structure for CAMHS are having a positive impact on waiting times.

The C&AG also found however that governance arrangements for CAMHS have not been robust and have not operated effectively. Since June 2019, the Health and Community Services Department (HCS) and the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES) have had joint responsibility for delivering CAMHS. However there has not been a robust, agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place to govern this relationship and to assure the safe and high-quality delivery of services. New governance arrangements are being established in 2022 - however the Terms of References for key groups and boards within the new structure are yet to be finalised.

The C&AG also reports that there has been no overarching and co-ordinated approach to consideration of CAMHS performance and risk data. There has been a disconnect in the management of 'clinical' (which is viewed as HCS's responsibility) and 'operational' (CYPES) performance and risk information. Alignment of data and information, to enable joint clinical and operational oversight of the quality of services, has been lacking. For

both CYPES and HCS, the range and quality of service data relating to CAMHS is recognised as in need of improvement.

Compared to UK benchmarks, in 2019/20 the CAMHS caseload was twice as high as the UK average. The benchmark data indicated that Jersey CAMHS keeps children and young people on caseloads for longer than elsewhere. However, until recently, Jersey has included children and young people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in its CAMHS caseload information (unlike the UK).

Lynn Pamment found that the Children's Health and Wellbeing Transformation Programme has assessed the staffing need for CAMHS. There is a however current vacancy level of more than 21% of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) establishment staff against the planned establishment for CAMHS as set out in the Strategy.

The C&AG found that the guidance on how to manage situations where children and young people 'did not attend' (DNA) their CAMHS appointment is not consistent with best practice and is not sufficient to ensure children and young people are safe and that they receive appropriate services and care.

Lynn Pamment said:

"The Government has committed to investment in the Children's Health and Wellbeing Transformation Programme, including CAMHS, through the Government Plan 2022-2025. This investment is supported by a robust Strategy launched in February 2022.

Governance, data collection, risk and performance management for CAMHS have been weak. For the Strategy to lead to a step change in service quality and range of provision it will need to be supported by stronger and more effective governance and other arrangements and more specific and detailed implementation plans."

The report *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services* can be found at: <https://www.jerseyauditoffice.je> at @AuditJersey on Twitter and on the Jersey Audit Office page on LinkedIn.

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