

St. Michael's House

End of Year Message for Families 2019

Children Services

As the year comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Children & Young Persons (CYP) & Supports Services Team, to wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

As in 2018, 2019 continued to pose challenges in delivering the level of service needed by children and families. This continued to be felt in particular in clinical services, in respite and in support services. The lack of school placements has also been an issue for some families. SMH has continued to liaise with the HSE and with the Department of Education to advocate for the needs of children and families in this regard and to highlight the deficits.

The day to day work of delivering key assessments, therapeutic interventions and staff and family training has continued throughout 2019. In addition the CYP Directorate, in close collaboration with the Director of Clinical Services and the Clinical Management Team, has continued to work to develop and improve services across the CYP Directorate. Some examples include:

- Continued development and review of School Age Clinical services North and South. The development of the 5 new school age teams continued throughout 2019. I acknowledge the challenges of the referral system being experienced by families and this continues to remain under close review. We will be seeking more formal feedback from families early in 2020.
- The clinical departments have continued their ongoing work in CYP services to build on the development of effective and efficient evidence based clinical pathways for children accessing services.
- Completion of the live phase of the Key Working Service pilot project in partnership with UCD Centre for Disability Studies at the UCD School of Psychology. A number of focus groups took place with families, staff and Managers in 2019, to look at the impact of the pilot. Completion of the data gathering process will take place in the first quarter of 2020 along with a presentation of key findings & recommendations.
- In 2019, the Early Services teams developed a set of principles to guide individual planning with families 0-6 years, following consultation with families and staff. This will be piloted with the Ballymun Early Services team families in 2020.
- A review of the SMH preschool support services, which included consultation with a number of stakeholders was ongoing in 2019 and will complete early in 2020.

- The CYP transitions group led by Sue Cookney, developed a good practice model on transitions to guide planning for transitions across the CYP service. This protocol recognises the need to support children and families at key transition points.
- Continued work with the St Michael's House Special National Schools which included meetings with the Department of Education and with the Ministers for Education and Disabilities in relation to the substantial financial and infrastructural needs of our schools and the children requiring special school placements.
- The CYP Social Work Department updated the Children's First Safeguarding Policy in St. Michaels House to incorporate changes brought about by the Children's First Act 2015 and work continued in collaboration with the training department to ensure that all staff receive online training in Children's First.
- Ongoing collaboration with the MHID (Mental Health in Intellectual Disability) steering group, for the development of SMH CAMHS/ID (Community Mental Health Services for children with Intellectual Disability) services.
- Establishment of the Horizons Project by the Community Support Team in collaboration with clinical services, the OTC and DCU. This project aims to support individuals to develop the skills that will enable them to live more independently.
- An evolving programme of summer supports for children during July and August coordinated by the Link Support Services, School nursing and care staff, supported closely by the SMH fundraising department.
- In 2019, the Service Area continued to work with our Section 38 and 39 colleagues and the HSE in relation to the National Programme for CYP clinical services, Progressive Disability Services (PDS). In 2019 the Labour Court ruled in favour of the appointment of Network Managers. These are key posts necessary to move forward PDS. St. Michael's House will appoint 4 Network Managers in 2020. The school Age Disability Team set up in 2016 continues to operate in SMH under the PDS criteria.

I hope this gives you an oversight of the work of the CYP service.

The Service is aware of the deficits and the fact that not all families are receiving the service that they need. We will continue throughout 2020, to advocate to the state on behalf of all children and families attending SMH services.

Best wishes

Tracey McKenna
On behalf of the Children's Directorate Management Team