



The College of Psychiatry of Ireland
Coláiste Síciatrachta na hÉireann

Press Statement 3rd October 2012

College of Psychiatry of Ireland highlight Homelessness and Mental Illness for World Mental Health Day 2012

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland will mark World Mental Health Day 2012 with a one day Conference, “*Homelessness & Mental Illness: What can be done?*”

The conference will bring together a number of speakers from nursing, psychiatry, social work, general practice and homeless agencies to discuss the many challenges facing those who are homeless and live with mental illness.

The objective of the conference, devised in collaboration with Focus Ireland, Depaul Ireland, social workers and community mental health nurses, is to provide an opportunity to learn of practical ways to address the mental health needs of homeless people and is aimed at all who work with voluntary homeless agencies, work in the Mental Health Services and anyone who has an interest or active involvement in this area.

An interactive panel discussion, with Q & A from the audience, will be chaired by Eileen Dunne, RTÉ newscaster & radio presenter and ambassador of SeeChange, Ireland’s National Mental Health Stigma Reduction Partnership.

Keynote speaker, **Dr Philip Timms, Consultant Psychiatrist who works with the START Homeless Team in London** will present on the London Experience of providing mental health services for homeless people with severe mental health problems.

Other speakers on the day include: Dr Kevin Kilbride, Consultant Psychiatrist, who will present key recommendations from the College paper on *Specialist Mental Health Services for Homeless People*; Mr Mike Allen, Director of Advocacy, Communication and Research at Focus Ireland & Dr Leona Spellman, Consultant Psychiatrist who will focus on *rehabilitation and housing*; Dr Eamon Keenan, Consultant Psychiatrist in Substance Misuse at the Drug Treatment Centre Board, who will present on *dual diagnosis: addiction & mental illness in the homeless population*; Mr Frank Hynes, Community Mental Health Nurse and Leonie Boland Occupational Therapist from Programme for the Homeless in Dublin who will jointly present a session on *Multi Disciplinary Teams working in a Specialist Mental Health Service for the Homeless*; Dr Austin O’Carroll from Mountjoy Street Medical Practice, speaking from a *GP perspective* and Dr Joanne Fenton, Consultant Psychiatrist.

“*We would strongly encourage mental health professionals and those in the voluntary and social services sectors who have an interest in or deal with those who are homeless to attend. The day will provide delegates with a chance to raise their own awareness of the issues and to discuss their service’s concerns for homeless people and their mental health. We have delegates registered so far from prison services, social services, mental health services and homeless organisations so it should prove to be a stimulating day*” said Dr Anne Jeffers, Director of External Affairs & Policy.

The College has chosen Homelessness and Mental Illness as a theme for 2012, highlighting the problem through debates and research over the past year, including the College's annual Spike Milligan Public Speaking Competition for medical students.

The conference takes place on Friday 12th October from 9.30 to 4.00 at the Clarion Hotel IFSC, Excise Walk, Dublin 1. Places are limited and selling fast, but there is still time to book. Registration forms can be obtained from www.irishpsychiatry.ie or directly from the College of Psychiatry office.

Ends

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