

Press Statement 7 June 2016

College of Psychiatrists asks WHEN will Irish Mental Health Services be fit for purpose

“Figures released by the HSE and recent slights of hand with the mental health budget indicate that the support for *A Vision for Change* is simply PR that does nothing for those in real need across the country” said Dr John Hillery, Director of Communication and Public Education for the College.

The released HSE figures reported by RTE today suggest that the people with psychiatric illness do not have access to community based interventions and supports, ten years after the launch of *A Vision for Change*. This document promised a Recovery orientated service nationwide.

“We know of a couple of areas with seven day support and home care teams but they are by no means available nationally” continued Dr Hillery.

The College has written to Minister Harris asking that preparation of his proposed ten year plan for the health services does not further impede the implementation of *A Vision for Change*.

Dr Hillery added,

“Ireland has a plan for mental health services that is the envy of other countries so why wait? People with mental health problems, their families and staff welcome the continued articulated support by politicians for *A Vision for Change* but we want to see the practical manifestation of modern supports for people with mental illness nationally where and when they need them”.

The College has proposed [five priorities for mental health service development](#) and is asking the Government to get the basics right and in place first with:

- 24/7 community mental health teams nationally
- a proper plan for the attraction and retention of staff of all disciplines
- an appropriate IT support for the assessment and planning of need nationally

The College has also submitted a ten year manpower plan to the HSE that will ensure the availability of appropriately skilled psychiatrists across the country in the years to come - see [CPsychI Workforce planning Report 2013 - 2023](#).

The College insists that €12 million from the ring fenced PfG (programme for government) €35 million moved from the mental health budget could have been and still can be used to improve services nationally. The overall total mental health budget needs to be increased to nearer 12% of the total health budget (€12,928.5million 2016) from its current €791million which is just 6%, including the PfG allocated ring-fenced funds.

“Posts are unattractive to applicants for many reasons. Instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul we should be using all monies, particularly allocated PfG funding, to improve services and thus reassure vulnerable citizens and attract quality applicants. It’s not simply about salaries” Dr Hillery concluded.

In the coming month the [College Blog](#) will address how €12 million can be used this year to move us towards attaining the Vision in *A Vision for Change*.

Ends

Notes for the Editor:

*The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland was formed in 2009. It is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. The Mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry. The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and the HSE for the training of doctors to become specialists in psychiatry and for the continuing assurance of the career long competence of specialists in psychiatry. The College supports the delivery of mental health services in line with the recovery model and supports the delivery of the national policy on mental health services 'A Vision for Change'**.

**A Vision for Change (2006) is a strategy document which sets out the direction for Mental Health Services in Ireland. It is a framework for promoting mental health at all levels of society and for delivering specialist care to everyone who needs it. It recognises both the strengths and inadequacies of existing services and outlines a strategy for building on the innovations heralded by Planning for the Future. It details a series of actions for developing a comprehensive person-centred model of mental health service provision.*