

# IRISH MEDICAL TIMES

## CPsychI to take on views of users and carers in training

April 19, 2013



Dr Anthony McCarthy, CPsychI

**By Catherine Reilly.**

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland (CPsychI) is to examine how the “broad-lived experience” of patients and their carers can be “best used” in the training of psychiatrists.

The action is included in a new discussion paper published by the CPsychI and prepared by the carers’ subgroup of REFOCUS (Recovery Experience Forum Of Carers and Users of Services), which was founded by CPsychI in 2011 to help improve psychiatrist training and identify ways of advancing mental health services. REFOCUS is comprised of 10 service users and 10 family members.

Obtaining a greater insight into the carer’s perspective would require careful planning as to the lessons carers can teach trainee and practising consultant psychiatrists through the medium of the CPsychI training programme and CPD events, noted the paper. “To make it credible for trainee psychiatrists, it would have to be examinable in some way. This might be seen as a very big step but it is one that carers believe needs to be taken.”

It recommended an assessment of how and where the carer perspective and role could be incorporated into the postgraduate training and CPD for qualified psychiatrists.

The paper stated that the CPsychI had committed to discussing “how the broad-lived experience of members of REFOCUS can be best used in training”. In particular, this could address the need for trainee psychiatrists to understand the experience of carers in the family/home context. According to the paper, CPsychI “plans to include members of REFOCUS in the College examinations in autumn 2013” and all induction days for trainees “should include presentations from carers”.

The paper, titled ‘Who Cares? Listening to the Needs and Experiences of Carers of People with Mental Illness’, was launched at the CPsychI’s 5th Annual Spring Conference held recently in Athlone, which was attended by around 450 delegates.

In his opening address, **Dr Anthony McCarthy**, President of the CPsychI, urged psychiatrists to “start the conversation” as to how the views of carers and service users “could be more heard and acted upon, both in postgraduate training and in your services”.