



The College of Psychiatry of Ireland
Coláiste Síciatrachta na hÉireann

Press Statement 24th January 2011

Still Forgotten?

Vulnerable Citizens ignored, exported and exiled - at what cost?

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland today launches a report to mark the 5th anniversary of *A Vision for Change*, the national mental health policy. ***Excluded, Expelled and Exported: The citizens we've ignored and those we've exiled*** [www.irishpsychiatry.ie], highlights the lack of progress in providing adequate, appropriate and affordable care for one of Ireland's most vulnerable groups - those with an intellectual disability (ID) who require an additional specialised mental health service.

In 2006, *A Vision for Change* recommended the rollout, within 7-10 years, of 39 teams nationally dedicated to the mental health care of people with intellectual disability. The College report notes that, to date, only two such teams have been developed, neither of which is fully staffed. The College calls for a time-lined implementation of *A Vision for Change* and the immediate initiation of the 39 Mental Health ID teams that were recommended to be in place by 2016 at the latest. Additionally, the College report draws attention to the 55 Irish citizens with intellectual disability who are currently in facilities abroad, far removed from their families, friends and wider community, due to the chronic lack of suitable facilities.

"The College is concerned" says Dr Siobhán Barry, one of the report's authors, *"that there has been minimal development of mental health services for people with an intellectual disability, and the launch of 'A Vision for Change' did not improve this to any appreciable degree"*. Dr Barry pointed out that placement of people with intellectual disability out of state is *"an infringement of people's rights and denies many their citizenship. In addition, the annual cost of placing people who are in residential care abroad is €5 million at a minimum, with the cumulative cost reaching a figure in 2010 of over €30 million"*.

The Chair of the College's Faculty of Learning Disability Psychiatry, Dr Peter Leonard, says that *"exporting vulnerable people in this manner means that local expertise has not developed and some of the 55 people currently in facilities outside of Ireland have been there for 30 years. This is not acceptable or sustainable."*

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