



Top 5 Priorities for Ireland's Mental Health

A Vision for Change maps what services should be available to people with mental health problems.

Ten years on we still have inequality of access to services across Ireland.

The College Calls on You when Elected to Ensure Delivery of:

1. 24/7 Community Based Mental Health Teams for All Ages Nationally

Mental Health problems do not occur on a 9 to 5 Monday to Friday timeframe. Adults and children with mental health problems need rapid access to professional support and intervention around the clock when debilitating, stressful and frightening symptoms occur. *A Vision for Change* gives clear directions on how such services should be provided. If inroads are to be made into the continued morbidity and mortality due to suicide, self-harm, chronic mental illness and alcohol and substance abuse:

- Community based mental health teams must be provided nationally on a 24/7 basis
- The financing and operating of our mental health services must continue to move from a hospital bed based model to a person centred, recovery oriented 24/7 community based model

2. Multi-Disciplinary Team Development, Training and Retention in Mental Health

A Vision for Change delineates the types and numbers of mental health professionals who should be involved in mental health teams in each area nationally. These parameters still have not been achieved or met. Ireland needs:

- Nationwide recruitment of recommended professionals to fully resource the teams giving people in need coordinated professional support where and when they need it
- A national staff recruitment and retention plan incorporating the training and development needed for team members, which is essential

3. Nurturing the Mental Health of the Future Generation

Over 8% of Irish children have a moderate to severe mental health difficulty and 2% of children at any point in time will require specialist mental health intervention. To reduce suffering in our vulnerable children and adolescents the following provisions must be made in the Education budget:

- School programmes promoting resilience and positive mental health nationally
- Appropriate educational supports to those with specific learning problems and social problems
- Early and prompt recognition of pupils with specific educational support needs
- Individual counselling for pupils in distress and appropriate referral pathways for those in need of more intense input

4. A Mental Health Information Technology System is Urgently Needed

To promote efficient, safe and supportive services the ICT system should:

- Facilitate communication between mental health professionals (both Psychiatry and Primary Care)
- Facilitate communication between the system and patients/service users
- Enable audit and review to ensure efficient use of resources

5. Increase the percentage of Health Budget for Mental Health to 12%

The continuously low percentage of health budget for mental health (currently 6%) is a human rights issue and a scandal. 6% falls far short of that of other countries such as UK 12%, Canada and New Zealand 11%.

To remedy this:

- Plan multi annual allocated funding beginning with a 5 year rolling budget of incremental increases to a minimum 12%
- Provide a transparent, measurable, accountable and reviewable system of implementation

Equality of Access for All

It's the Very Least Our Nations' Mental Health is Entitled To