

Press Statement 11 October 2017

College of Psychiatrists extremely concerned for those requiring access to mental health support and services now and in the future following Budget 2018

Following yesterday's announcement and confirmation of detail today the College believes the Budget shows lack of commitment, vision and real concern for the mental health of the nation and for those vulnerable in society due to mental distress and chronic enduring mental illness.

The 2018 budget announcement and further detail today indicate that the total budget for mental health will be €888.1 million. Once off €35million extra development funding for 2018 includes the unspent €20million extra funding provided for 2017. In effect, relative to overall increases, the mental health budget remains static and/or slightly reduced for 2018.

The College points out that yet another budget total for mental health services **falls far short of the international norms and standards** in similar jurisdictions at **only 5.7%** of the overall Health Budget of €15.3bn for 2018. (Mental Health Service budgets in the UK stand at 13% and in Canada and New Zealand at 11% of their total health budgets). It falls far short of the recommendations in the *Future of Healthcare Slaintecare report* of 10%. It falls far short of that of *A Vision for Change 2006*, which recommends just over 8.24% but requires revision to account for changes since 2006.

“An opportunity has been lost once again to really commit to giving mental health parity of esteem with physical health,” said Dr Miriam Kennedy, Director Communication and Public Education. *“It is difficult to see how this budget can adequately resource the many aspects required for mental health issues and illness to be addressed in the future. Prevention strategies; early intervention supports and services; support in the community and most importantly equal access for all nationwide to fully resourced multidisciplinary teams and appropriate services and crisis supports in and out of hours cannot be improved or developed without realistic funding. And in addition we have a recruitment and retention crisis that requires urgent action and planning and those working in the Mental Health Services, at the front line being asked to do more and more with less which ultimately affects the support and care they can provide to those vulnerable in society”*.

The College points to recent reports on RTE that approximately €65million extra is needed on 2017 funding just to maintain existing levels of service in the context of increased demand.

The College highlights that fully resourced multidisciplinary teams in mental health services in other countries have resulted in recovery oriented services for the person including support for their family/carers, reduction in suicide and self-harm incidences and less demand for admission to hospital.

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 2006 national policy on mental health services *A Vision for Change* in line with recommendations for adjustment 11 years on.

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