



# CPSYCHI 2020 ELECTION MANIFESTO

## EQUITY OF ACCESS FOR ALL **No Health Without Mental Health**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) consistently states and advocates for the essential role mental health has in achieving health for all people. The WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 includes 4 major objectives:

- More effective leadership and governance for mental health.
- Provision of comprehensive, integrated mental health and social care services in community-based settings.
- Implementation of strategies for promotion and prevention.
- Strengthened information systems, evidence and research.

Any Irish government should at a minimum adopt these objectives.

**The next government as a first step should appoint a ‘Super’ Junior Minister for Mental Health.**



**1 in 4  
PEOPLE**

25 % of our population will be affected by a mental disorder at some point in their lifetime. Despite necessary mental health and resilience education, promotion, preventive measures by individuals, workplace initiatives and so on, members of our society will still live with and need support and treatment for severe, enduring, pervasive mental illness and disorders.

Research indicates that  
**FOR EVERY**

**€1 SPENT**  
on Mental Health Services

There is a potential  
**SAVING OF**

**€4**

(London School of Economics & Politics 2013)

**€8 Billion**

Mental health problems cost the Irish economy over €8 billion a year (3.17% of GDP) - indirect cost of €4.17 billion on labour market and direct costs of €2.23 billion on health systems and €1.9 billion on social benefits.

(OECD Health at a Glance 2018 report)

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# PRIORITIES FOR ELECTION 2020

## 1 Make Mental Health Service Provision a Priority

**Double the Funding:** A minimum 12% of the overall Health budget for direct costs required to run the Mental Health Services. It has lagged at a scandalous low level of between 5 and 6 percent for over 12 Years. Currently (2020), Mental Health Services receive circa €1 billion of the €17.5 billion provided for the overall Health Services.

Research, electronic data and communication systems are the back bone of any health service. Outcomes for patients at all levels of pathways of care can be monitored and evaluated which provides a more realistic measurement of patient care and services rather than a focus just on key performance indicators. Urgent planning for and nationwide implementation of all three is needed.

Appoint a Super Junior Minister for Mental Health and ensure the Health Service has a mental health services division with an appropriate director to lead it. Without this focus and leadership, the mental health of the nation will continue to suffer and deteriorate.

## 2 Prioritise the Physical Health Needs of People with Mental Health Needs

People with psychiatric illness have specific physical health needs and worse overall health outcomes but face many and extensive barriers to accessing appropriate care in all parts of the Health Services. Their needs should be prioritised with appropriate pathways of care and relevant specialists required.

Include Psychiatry representation on the Sláintecare Implementation Advisory Council which currently is not in place.

## 3 Address the Recruitment and Retention Crisis

Ensure consistent, collaborative and transparent manpower planning and funding based on timely and centralised data. Ireland needs 800 specialist psychiatrists by 2023 (*College of Psychiatrists Workforce Planning Report 2013-2023*) as well as recommended numbers of allied mental health professionals to provide a multi-disciplinary, biopsychosocial Recovery-oriented service. The number of consultant hospital doctors in Psychiatry in the HSE in 2019 was 391 (*Government publication 'Health in Ireland Key Trends 2019'*). This represents an inadequate and low increase in ten years of only 7.5% from 2010 levels of 364. This is wholly inadequate for a fit for purpose mental health service to meet the increased mental illness and distress needs of Irish society.

Junior doctors, including those training to be specialists in psychiatry, have a fundamental role in service provision leading to positive patient outcomes and recovery in Primary and Secondary Care. Adequate and transparent processes for funding specialty training is needed. Funding for one speciality should occur on the basis of need and not to the detriment of another.

→ Increase Psychiatry Specialist/Consultant posts and Psychiatry Trainee posts.

→ Improve working conditions including:

- a plan to reintroduce a culture in health services which is respectful of the skills and value of each discipline
- reduce burnout levels and ensure supports are available to facilitate service delivery without overwhelming individual clinicians
- fair and equitable remuneration with career enhancement and learning opportunities

→ Ensure research, learning and teaching are reinstated as part of trainee and specialist contracts.



# PRIORITIES FOR ELECTION 2020

## 4 Nurture the Future Generation and Establish a National Lead for Youth Mental Health

About half of mental disorders begin before the age of 14 (WHO).

- Invest in and plan urgently for adequate Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- A key ask of the National Youth Mental Health Taskforce Report (*December 2017*) recommended a National Lead for Youth Mental Health be established and a Lead for Youth Mental Health in each Community Health Organisation but no progress has been made on this. The next government should implement this immediately.

## 5 Reduce the Hidden Costs of Mental Health Service Provision

Less obvious costs to mental illness need to be urgently and continuously addressed such as:

- **Social care, housing and employment** all take from mental health service provision and budgets more than in any other medical illness – mental illness impacts much more on these aspects of a person than in other illnesses. Cross departmental cooperation and collaboration is needed.
- **Family Carers in Ireland** save the Irish state 10 billion euro a year caring for loved ones across all age groups with varied and multiple physical and mental health needs. But they do so to the detriment and continued shocking deterioration of their health, finances, employment and other needs. The burden of this care and the unmet needs of those they care for also impacts on mental health service provision and needs urgent and continuous attention. (*Family Carers Ireland [FCI] and CPsychI/FCI/UCD 'Paying the Price' reports 2019 & 2020*).
- The crisis situation in **Child Liaison Psychiatry**, which sees emergency departments often overrun with high risk vulnerable young people, needs urgent attention starting with a review of the current service strategy and inadequate capacity.
- Continue to tackle **substance misuse and abuse**.
  - The devastating role of alcohol in mental illness and related deaths is well documented. The Public Health (Alcohol) Act needs urgent commencement of *all* elements to save lives.
  - **Cannabis** related admissions to general and psychiatric hospitals increased by 90% and 185% respectively in the period 2008-2016 (*Smyth, O'Farrell and Daly, 2019*). Cannabis is the primary drug implicated in a quarter of all people accessing specialised drug treatment services in Ireland. A cannabis use disorder is now the most common presenting problem for people seeking addiction treatment under the age of 25 years, even more common than alcohol use disorder. Cannabis abuse is the main problem in adolescent addiction services and is serious enough to have a life changing impact. A public information campaign about the potential harms of early use, both medical and non-medical, is warranted.
  - Urgent development of a **nationwide service for under-18 substance misuse** is needed to extend the positive change and outcomes that such services have yielded in few existing sites.

## 6 Provide for the Mental Health Needs of Vulnerable Groups

Specialised supports and services are required for particularly vulnerable groups such as Homeless, Prisoners, The Travelling Community, Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants, and Children and Adults with neurological disorders, neurodevelopmental conditions and disabilities.

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## **Role of Psychiatrists**

Psychiatry is the branch of medicine which is concerned with the understanding, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the mind. These disorders can involve emotions, behaviour, perceptions and thinking.

Psychiatrists are fully trained specialist doctors competent in the assessment, diagnosis and management of mental disorders. Treatment and support of people with mental health problems depends on a wide range of professionals including psychiatric nurses, social workers, clinical psychologists, psychotherapists and occupational therapists. The psychiatrist works together with these professionals as part of a multidisciplinary team.

Psychiatrists are key to the delivery of emergency and continuing support to people with chronic enduring mental illness. A psychiatrist in modern mental health services is required to be a brain/mind specialist and be able to practise evidence-based psychiatry attuned to an individual patient's needs. Psychiatry is an integrative discipline which spans the evidence base from biological sciences to psychology and the social sciences.

Psychiatrists work in a number of different places including hospitals, emergency departments, community mental health services, people's own homes, residential centres, nursing homes and prisons.

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. It 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 mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry.