



Ms Mary Butler TD,
Minister for Mental Health and Older People,
Department of Health,
50 – 58, 1, Miesian Plaza,
Baggot Street Lower,
Dublin, D02 XW14

30th September 2020

Re: College Response to 'Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone' (published June 2020)

Dear Minister,

The College of Psychiatrists is committed to achieving the highest standards of care in our mental health services.

To this end the College welcomes the opportunity to join the National Implementation and Monitoring Committee for ***Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone***.

However, the College believes those with severe and chronic enduring mental illness are overlooked and stigmatised in this policy.

As clinical leaders with expertise specific to psychiatry, and a remit to improve the standards of mental health care in Ireland, we have a number of concerns and reservations about *Sharing the Vision*.

We believe it was an error not to consult with our College, or with other relevant mental health professional bodies, resulting in major gaps and deficiencies in the policy for those with severe and enduring mental illness.

The College fully supported *A Vision for Change*, a successfully accepted policy produced in collaboration with many and all stakeholders, and regret that many of its recommendations were not funded and introduced. We acknowledge the need for an updated policy, and are hopeful that the many excellent recommendations from *A Vision for Change* will be and continue to be funded and implemented.

There is much within *Sharing the Vision* that the College can support, however we would warn against introducing any standalone innovations without ensuring evidence-based practices are fully resourced, and any new innovations are part of a well-integrated service.

The College is willing to work with the Department, and with representatives from other disciplines, in correcting these omissions and deficiencies ensuring standards within mental healthcare are improved.



The College offers this response as an aid to the development of a world class mental health service that can build on *A Vision for Change with Sharing the Vision*. Through the planned National Implementation and Monitoring Committee, up to date and recent advances and developments in the management of all mental illnesses can shape successful implementation of recommendations ensuring supportive life enhancing supports for those in our society with mental illness.

The attached papers give a summary response to *Sharing the Vision*, taking into account accompanying documentation on the Departments website, and the advice received from Mr. Tom O'Brien (7th July 2020 meeting) and in his letter dated 18th August 2020. They also provide very detailed reviews of *Sharing the Vision* from a number of individual College Faculties and Committees representing specialist areas in Psychiatry.

We look forward to meeting you soon and working with you and the department to achieve the highest standards of care in our mental health services for those in our society who need to them.

Yours sincerely,

Dr William Flannery

President