



The Mental Health Commission Supports Launch of New Health and Social Care Public Service

23rd September 2011: The Mental Health Commission supports the launch of Healthcomplaints, a public service initiative to help members of the public understand where and how to complain about health and social care services.

Minister of State Roisin Shortall, TD, with responsibility for Primary Care launched the initiative at a conference in Dublin Castle on 19 September on *How and Where to Complain about Health and Social Care Services*.

Healthcomplaints is a toolkit which provides information and support about how and where to make complaints on services in health or social care. It consists of a guide for the public; a leaflet, a poster, a staff training guide and the website – www.healthcomplaints.ie.

This is the first time an initiative like this has been launched in Ireland.

Healthcomplaints is a collaboration between complaints handling bodies (the Office of the Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children), health and social care providers (Health Service Executive), regulators of services (Health Information and Quality Authority, Mental Health Commission), professional regulators (The Medical Council, An Bord Altranais, Corú, PHECC) and service user representatives (the Irish Patients' Association). It brings together 17 regulatory bodies and service providers.

Speakers at the conference in Dublin Castle included Cathal Magee, CEO of the HSE; Emily O'Reilly, Ombudsman; Prof Jane Grimson, Deputy CEO, HIQA; Caroline Spillane, CEO, Medical Council; Sylva Langford, Chairperson, Citizens Information Board; Dr Maura Pidgeon, CEO, An Bord Altranais; Patricia Gilheaney, CEO, Mental Health Commission; Pat Whelan, Director General, Office of the Ombudsman; Stephen McMahon, Irish Patients Association and Mrs Loretta Evans.

Mrs Evans, mother of Colin Evans, spoke about the tragic loss of Colin following a series of failures at a major teaching hospital, and her personal experience of dealing with the health service.

"Making our complaint about Colin's care helped us as a family to move on. We gained satisfaction from knowing that our actions will hopefully improve the lot of others. Making a complaint can make a difference but it is not easy. People need information and support and this initiative will certainly help provide some of this," she said.

A nationwide information campaign is being rolled-out through hospitals, nursing homes, GP surgeries, advocacy groups and through all the agencies and organisations involved in providing health and social care.

All the materials and more information can be downloaded from www.healthcomplaints.ie.

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