

A Hectic Six Months

The first half of 2010 has been a busy time for the Commission. We found ourselves at the centre of considerable media coverage after the publication of our 2009 Annual Report, which included the Report of the Inspector of Mental Health Services. This was accompanied by confirmation that the Commission has told three approved centres to end acute admissions by February 2011. Some specific details contained in the reports are outlined in this bulletin.

This bulletin also highlights the many positive events and initiatives which have taken place over the past few months, such as the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership, which came to Ireland and held a series of internationally significant events and we also report on developments in Ireland on service user empowerment and involvement.

I would like to thank the staff of the Commission for their work in striving for better standards and quality, and their commitment to a modern mental health service for all. On a personal level I would also like to thank them for the warm welcome they gave me last December when I joined the Commission and for the continued support they offer.



Hugh Kane

Chief Executive Officer

Mental Health Commission Tells Three Psychiatric Hospitals to Take No More Patients

The Commission has recently told three approved centres that they can no longer admit acute patients from February 2011.

The Mental Health Act 2001 allows the Mental Health Commission impose conditions on approved centres and it has done so in the cases of St. Senan's Hospital, St. Brendan's Hospital; and St. Ita's Hospital. These are centres in which the Inspector's reports over the past three years showed that the regulations were repeatedly not being complied with.

On foot of the 2009 report from the Inspector, the Commission asked these three centres to present action plans showing how they intended to comply with the regulations. However the plans were inadequate and showed little prospect that the regulations would be complied with in the future and as a result conditions were imposed. The details of the conditions are as follows:

- **St. Senan's Hospital:** admissions to two units must cease by 28th February 2011, the admission of children must cease by 30th June 2010, full compliance with the rules governing the use of seclusion and mechanical means of bodily restraint must be obtained by 10th September 2010.
- **St. Brendan's Hospital:** acute admissions (other than from rehabilitation services) to the approved centre must cease by 10th September 2010.
- **St. Ita's Hospital:** acute admissions must cease by 28th February 2011, two units are required to permanently close by 30th November 2010 and two units must be refurbished by 30th November 2010.

Mental Health Commission Publishes its Annual Report for 2009

The annual report of the Mental Health Commission for 2009 and the report of the Inspector of Mental Health Services, published in June, noted very little improvement in standards in approved centres for inpatients.

The annual report details the Commission's progress in implementing its own strategic plan and contains important statistics on involuntary admission of adults, the admission of children, and gives overview of the quality of care and treatment provided by mental health services.

Key findings contained within the Annual Report are outlined overleaf. However you can view the full report at www.mhcirl.ie/Publications/Annual_Reports.

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Mental Health Commission Annual Report 2009 Including the Report of the Inspector of Mental Health Services

KEY POINTS

Admission of Children & Adolescents

The phasing out of the admission of children and adolescents to adult centres is now well underway and will be complete by the end of 2011. In 2009 the Commission published a code of practice which said:

- That from July 2009 no child under 16 years of age is to be admitted to an approved adult centre;
- By December 2010 no child under 17 is to be admitted to an approved centre;
- That by December 2011 no child under 18 years is to be admitted to an adult centre for treatment.

This represents a complete phasing out of child and adolescent admissions to adult centres by 2011. If in exceptional circumstances, the admission of a child to an adult unit in an approved centre occurs in contravention to the new Code of Practice, then the approved centre is obliged to submit a detailed report to the Mental Health Commission explaining why the admission has taken place.

“This practice of admitting young people to inappropriate adult institutions has been of concern to us, to service users and their families and to mental health practitioners for many years”, according to Hugh Kane. “We are very pleased that this is now ending completely.”

In 2009, 200 under 18s (of whom 12 were under 16) were admitted to adult units. This is down on 2008 figures when 247 under 18s (of whom 24 were under 16) were admitted to adult units.

Involuntary Admissions & Mental Health Tribunals

The number of involuntary admissions in 2009 was 2024, a 1% rise on the 2004 involuntarily admitted in 2008. The 2008 figure had shown a 6% fall from the 2126 involuntarily admitted in 2007.

As required by law, the Mental Health Commission continued providing patients who are involuntarily admitted to an approved centre with an automatic independent review within 21 days of admission. The Mental Health Tribunals continue to provide an effective mechanism for independent reviews of admission and renewal orders, and protect the rights of patients admitted to approved centres on an involuntary basis.

There were 2,024 involuntary admission orders in 2009, and 1882 hearings were held by Mental Health Tribunals. Nine per cent admission orders were revoked at these hearings. A significant number of admission orders were revoked by the Responsible Consultant Psychiatrist before the 21 day period elapsed.

Service User Empowerment & Involvement

The Mental Health Commission produced a number service user information resources in 2009, notably the Headspace toolkit, a self advocacy and rights based toolkit for young people accessing inpatient mental health services which we published in January 2010. The toolkit can be viewed at www.headspaceireland.ie.

During 2009, the Commission also published service user guides for adults on the new code of practice on admission, transfer and discharge, and the code of practice for the guidance of persons working with people with intellectual disability and mental health problems.

In November 2009, the Commission, in partnership with the HSE and two independent mental health service providers, commenced an 18 month project, incorporating 11 sites around the country, to ensure the centrality of patient involvement in their own care, treatment and recovery.



Chairman Edmond O’Dea with CEO Hugh Kane pictured at the launch of the MHC’s Annual Report for 2009.

Teamworking Within Mental Health Service in Ireland

The development of more effective teamworking within mental health services in Ireland remains a prime concern for the Mental Health Commission. To that end the MHC commissioned a resource paper to help assist mental health teams in understanding what contributes to successful team-working and in developing creative solutions for more effective teamworking.

Effective teamworking does not just happen. From the outset it needs to be fostered through good design and effective processes

aimed at achieving a patient-centred recovery-based approach to service provision.

Your copy of this resource paper can be downloaded from www.mhcirl.ie/Publications/Teamwork_Within_MNS.pdf.



500 World Leaders in Mental Health Gather in Ireland

Over 500 international leaders in mental health came together in Killarney last month to share their knowledge and experiences at the 'International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership' (IIMHL) event. The event provided a platform to showcase Irish innovation in mental health and to gain an insight into emerging trends and promising practice from other member countries.

The Mental Health Commission hosted two days of exchange meetings, the theme of which was '**Citizens in Partnership - Inclusion**

or Illusion', which reflects the central importance of the patients perspective and the path to recovery from mental illness.

The event was jointly hosted by the Department of Health & Children, Health Service Executive, National Service User Executive and the Mental Health Commission.

Mental Health Services Adopt New Approach

Earlier this year key providers of mental health services signed up to a new initiative designed to ensure agreed policies in mental health services are fully implemented.

In partnership with the HSE and the Mental Health Commission, two independent mental health services - St. Patrick's University Hospital and St. John of God Hospital - agreed to pilot the "Breakthrough Collaborative Model" of policy change in Ireland.

The collaborative will allow the parties work together to ensure that services are delivered in a more patient-focused way. It also seeks to implement agreed standards in the delivery of mental health services and is the first time that a Service Level Agreement of this nature and significance, and which incorporates independent measurement of progress, has been signed.



Fresh thinking: Pictured at the signing were Laverne McGuinness, HSE National Director of Integrated Services; the Chief Executive of St. Patrick's University Hospital Paul Gilligan; the Chief Executive of St. John of God Hospital, Monica Mooney; and the Chief Executive of the Mental Health Commission Hugh Kane.

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