

Mental Health Commission welcomes New Government's Commitment to *Vision for Change*

Monday 7th March 2011. The commitment by the new coalition government to the recommendations in *A Vision for Change*, the national policy on mental health, was welcomed today by the Mental Health Commission.

Dr Edmond O'Dea Chairman at the MHC said, "We need this kind of commitment if we are to succeed in our aim to provide a truly modern, accessible and integrated mental health service. '*A Vision for Change*' is the key to bringing about change and should be implemented in full. I hope that this commitment by the new government will ensure that the pace of fundamental change in our mental health services can now be accelerated."

In its programme for government entitled 'Government for National Recovery' the incoming coalition has given commitments to:

- Ring fencing €35m a year for the development of community mental health teams and services;
- Establishing a cross-departmental group to integrate good mental health policy into other areas;
- Endeavouring to end the practice of placing children and adolescents in adult wards; and
- Bringing in new legislation on mental capacity in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure the greatest degree of autonomy for people with intellectual disabilities or with mental illnesses.
- Reviewing the Mental Health Act 2001.

The CEO of the Mental Health Commission Ms Patricia Gilheaney said she welcomed the commitment to introducing legislation governing mental capacity. "This will be an important step in the move towards granting the maximum autonomy possible to people with mental illnesses and would bring Ireland into line with the best international thinking on this issue."

"We welcome the support for the closure of unsuitable institutions and the provision of care and treatment for service users in more appropriate community based facilities" she concluded.

A Vision for Change was adopted as Government policy on mental health services in 2006. It is designed to build positive mental health services throughout the community and to provide community based specialist services for people with mental illness. The policy envisages the reorientation of the delivery of mental health

services away from the old style model of institutional care to community based services.

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Note to the Editor:

The Mental Health Commission is an independent statutory body. The primary functions of the Mental Health Commission are to foster and promote high standards of care and good practice in the delivery of mental health services and to ensure that the interests of those involuntarily admitted are protected, pursuant to the Mental Health Act 2001.