

Lack of regulation means people in 24-hour residences are at risk of abuse and substandard living conditions and treatment, according to the Mental Health Commission

Mental Health Commission publish inspection reports into 43 of the country's 24-hour nurse supervised residences

EMBARGOED: To be released 01.01am Friday, 20th April 2018. The Mental Health Commission has found serious deficiencies in many 24-hour nurse supervised residences after inspecting 43 of these units, the largest number to date.

In 14% of those inspected doors were locked and residents were not free to leave. In 77% of them residents were unable to lock their bedroom doors.

Since the closure of many large psychiatric institutions, residences that are staffed 24 hours a day have opened in the community. Initially facilitating service users who had been long-stay residents in psychiatric hospitals, these 24-hour supervised residences now also accommodate people who have been discharged from both long-stay and acute mental health care services.

This is the first publication of inspection reports and is part of a three-year programme which will see the inspection of all 24-hour residences.

Commenting on the publication Dr Susan Finnerty, Inspector of Mental Health Services, said, "It is concerning that some of our most vulnerable citizens, many of whom have spent decades in psychiatric hospitals, are now being accommodated in unregulated, poorly maintained residences, that are too big, are institutionalised, restrictive and are not respectful of their privacy, dignity and autonomy."

John Saunders, Chairman of the Mental Health Commission said, "Ideally, there should be a "care pathway", where people move from hospital to highly supported accommodation, graduating to more independent settings as they gain skills and confidence. However, at present, there is a serious lack of provision of suitable accommodation options, and rehabilitation and recovery staff to enable service users to move through the different stages of recovery and progress towards the goal of independent community based living, and many people have to remain in highly supported accommodation."

"The Commission has consistently called for the regulation of 24-hour nurse supervised residences and the findings of these inspections demonstrate the necessity of regulation. We are calling for the government to take action in this regard," Mr Saunders concluded.

Summary of findings of 43 residences inspected:

- Residents were not free to leave in 14%, which had locked doors.
- There was no access to a kitchen to make tea, coffee or snacks in 44%.
- Residents were unable to lock their bedroom doors in 77% of residences.
- 58% had more than 10 beds - the maximum number of beds recommended in *A Vision for Change*.

- Only 44% of residences were in good physical condition.
- 19% required urgent maintenance and refurbishment.
- Only 59% of residences offered all residents single room accommodation.
- Two residences had bedrooms which catered for four people.
- In residences with shared rooms, 58% had no privacy between beds or within the bedrooms.
- A rehabilitation team provided services for 51% of these residences.
- Residents partook in community activities and there was evidence of social inclusion in 67%.

The full reports by the Inspector of Mental Health Services can be found here:

http://www.mhcirl.ie/Inspectorate_of_Mental_Health_Services/Other_MHS_Inspection_Reports

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Notes to the Editor:

About the Mental Health Commission

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.