

Rehabilitation and Recovery Services
 Donegal Mental Health Services
 Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO 1)
 2018/2019

Description

Donegal Mental Health Services cover a population of 160,927, a high proportion of which is older people. Donegal is a rural, low-density county with high levels of deprivation and a wide geographical area. There is no consultant-led team in rehabilitation and recovery. There is a dedicated Recovery Nurse Team, which consists of Area Director of Nursing (ADON), four clinical nurse specialist posts, and three health care assistants who provide some basic services to one sector only with a population of 70,000. These services are provided from 08:00 to 20:00, and at weekends. The Clinical Director provides support when required. There are no occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, cognitive behavioural therapists, peer support workers or arts therapists.

Population	160,927
Number of rehabilitation teams	0
Number of rehabilitation teams recommended by <i>A Vision for Change</i> to nearest 100,000 population	2

Staffing of Rehabilitation teams compared with recommendations of *A Vision for Change*

	Number in team	Recommendation in <i>A Vision for Change</i> for population of 160,927	Percentage of <i>A Vision for Change</i> Recommendations to nearest 100,000 population
Consultant psychiatrist	0	2	0%
Non consultant medical staff	0	No recommendation	
Team coordinator/ADON	1	No recommendation	
Nursing staff	4	10 minimum	27%
Occupational therapist	0	2	0%
Social worker	0	2	0%
Clinical psychologist	0	2	0%

Peer support workers	0	No recommendation	
Arts therapist	0	1	0%
Cognitive behavioural therapist	0	1	0%

Assertive Outreach team

There is no Assertive Outreach Team; however, there is a dedicated Nurse Recovery Team.

Training of staff

The service stated that there had been EOLAS¹ training, Mindfulness courses, Stress Control training and WRAP training, and that staff had attended Recovery courses but did not give numbers of staff trained.

Residential rehabilitation facilities

Residential rehabilitation facilities	Number	Number of beds
Specialist inpatient rehabilitation unit	0	0
Specialist community rehabilitation units	0	0
24-hour supervised residences	4	45 beds
Medium support residences	0	0
Low support residences	9	0
Supported independent accommodation	5	0

Day services

- Day Hospital, in the grounds of St. Conal's Hospital, with 40 places.
- Worklink North West, a training and support service for people who have experienced mental ill-health/illness, practices a person-centred, holistic and integrated approach. It has four training centres: two based in Letterkenny, one in Carndonagh, and one in Dungloe.

Rehabilitation and Recovery Initiatives

- Provision of Advancing Recovery Ireland programmes to staff, service users and families.

¹ Mental health information and learning programmes with a focus on assisting participants recovery journey

- Stress Control Programme with Donegal Mind Wellness.
- Provision of a housing officer and job coach through the Social Reform Fund. These are CHO 1-wide posts.
- Four programmes of EOLAS information and learning have been completed.
- Mental Health First Aid has been rolled out.
- Recovery College: The Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) is the cross-border health and social care partnership between the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland and the Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts, the Health and Social Care Board, and the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland. Through EU INTERREG funding, the establishment of a Mental Health Recovery College Network has been successful across the border areas, including Donegal. The Network will offer courses for people with mental health illnesses living in Donegal which will be co-delivered by professionals and those with lived experience of mental health issues.
- Donegal Mental Health Services have engaged with Tuath Housing, Praxis Care and the National Housing Strategy to transfer nine houses from HSE ownership to Tuath Housing in order to promote and facilitate independent living for people with mental health illnesses.

Challenges

- The main challenge is that there is no fully functioning consultant-led staffed rehabilitation team.
- Difficulties in recruitment, in particular for a consultant psychiatrist on the specialist register in the Medical Council.
- Difficult and extensive geographical area.
- High level of social deprivation and lack of access to transport, employment and housing.

Future Plans

- To set up the Donegal Accommodation Strategy Group.
- CAWT Recovery Group Enhancement.
- Roll out of IPS (IPS Supported Employment is an evidence-based approach to supported employment for people who have a severe mental health difficulty. <https://www.genio.ie/meeting-the-challenges/mental-health/employment-individual-placement-and-support>).

Conclusion

The rehabilitation service provided in Donegal is completely inadequate and does not serve the needs of people with serious and enduring mental illness. There are no staff apart from a small number of nursing and healthcare assistants, who provide a service to the best of their ability and with enthusiasm. A request for four additional posts has been put forward in the 2019 estimates. There are difficulties in attracting consultant psychiatrists to take up posts in the area. There has been no

comprehensive training of these staff in rehabilitation and recovery and other appropriate therapies. A request for additional posts for developing a rehabilitation team has been prioritised. There are difficulties with recruitment of staff due to location and the absence of an established, well-funded team; however, there are cross-border links which do provide a number of services and these are continuously being developed.

It is clear that there has to be creative thinking in providing a comprehensive rehabilitation service across CHO 1. There are well established, well-functioning teams in Cavan/Monaghan and Sligo/Leitrim in the same CHO. It seems that it would be possible to attract well-trained and skilled staff if there was a move to provide rehabilitation service of excellence across the whole CHO.