

Mental Health Commission publishes four inspection reports

Decrease in compliance at three approved centres in Dublin

Monday 11th March, 2024: The Mental Health Commission (MHC) has this morning published four inspection reports for approved inpatient mental health centres across Dublin. Three centres saw a decrease in their annual compliance rate, while another recorded a slight increase.

The reports published today focus on St Aloysius Ward at the Mater Misericordia University Hospital (76% compliance, an increase from 73% in 2022); the Central Mental Hospital in Portrane (62% compliance, a decrease from 82% in 2022); St Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service at St Ita's Campus in Donabate (73% compliance, a decrease from 82% in 2022); and Elm Mount Unit at St Vincent's University Hospital (66% compliance, a decrease from 91% in 2022).

Quality initiatives observed during the inspections included the introduction of a family members, carers and supported advisory network; the refurbishment of a family room with residents selecting the artwork; the development by an occupational therapy team of a community leave booklet for staff and residents with an array of productive, educational and community-based activities; and the development of mood boards for residents, which was utilised as a communication tool to positively support self-awareness and emotional regulation.

Noting the decline in compliance ratings across three of the centres, the Director of Regulation at the Mental Health Commission, Gary Kiernan said: "It is always a concern when we observe a year-on-year drop in compliance with what we consider to be minimum standards. Rules, regulations and codes of practice are there to help ensure that the safety and rights of patients in our mental health services are continually upheld."

"Critical non-compliances with the rules governing the use of seclusion; the code of practice for physical restraint; and for the regulation for risk management is particularly concerning," he added. "These rules, regulations and codes protect the safety, dignity and human rights of patients during their most vulnerable moments."

Non-compliances observed during the inspections included:

- two critical-risk non-compliances for the rules governing seclusion and the code of practice on the use of physical restraint at **St Aloysius Ward**;
- three high-risk non-compliances for the regulations relating to staffing, policies, and risk management procedures at the **Central Mental Hospital**;
- one critical-risk non-compliance for the regulation relating to risk management procedures at **St Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service**;
- one critical-risk non-compliance for the regulation relating to risk management procedures at **Elm Mount Unit at St Vincents University Hospital**.

The MHC requires corrective and preventive action plans (CAPAs) from all services where non-compliances are identified, each of which must address each non-compliance specifically. The MHC monitors the implementation of these CAPAs on an ongoing basis and requests further information and action as necessary. Enforcement action is taken when the MHC is concerned that the care and treatment provided in an approved centre may be a risk to the safety, health, and wellbeing of residents, or where there has been a failure by the provider to address an ongoing area of non-

compliance. All critical risk issues are considered by the MHC's Regulatory Management Team (RMT) as a matter of course.

Enforcement actions commonly arise from inspection findings, quality and safety notifications, and compliance monitoring. Enforcement actions available to the MHC range from the aforementioned CAPAs (at the lower end of enforcement) to removing an approved centre from the register and/or pursuing prosecution (at the higher end).

Links to Individual Reports:

- [St Aloysius Ward, Mater Misericordia University Hospital](#)
- [Central Mental Hospital, Portrane](#)
- [St Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service, St Ita's Campus, Donabate](#)
- [Elm Mount Unit, St Vincent's University Hospital](#)

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Notes to the Editor:

About the Mental Health Commission:

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) is an independent statutory body. The primary functions of the MHC 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. The MHC also has statutory responsibility for the Decision Support Service (DSS) under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015.