



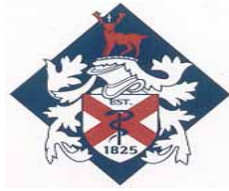
Submission of the Independent Mental Health Service Providers Group

Bloomfield Care Centre
Highfield Hospital Group
St. John of God Hospital
St. Patrick's University Hospital

to

**The Independent
Monitoring Group
for
A Vision for Change**

November 2009



Bloomfield Care Centre, Highfield Hospital Group, St. John of God Hospital and St. Patrick's University Hospital are all "Approved Centres" under the Mental Health Act 2001 and are subject to the same regulatory provisions as our public sector colleagues.

Despite the commitment and dedication of the staff of the HSE implementation of A Vision for Change continues to be challenging.

"Implementation of the plan is held back by structural problems – work practises- and funding problems"¹.

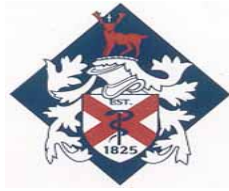
The Independent Monitoring Group in its last report expressed concern regarding the slow rate of advancement and disappointment at the slow rate of progress in implementation² and the report *The Economics of Mental Health Care in Ireland*³ published in 2008, states that there are significant "economic, social, and individual gains to be had from increasing expenditure on mental health care services"

Specific concerns of The Independent Hospital Group are;

- Many patients, especially those with enduring mental illness are still receiving treatment in old out-dated institutions
- Of the 406 admissions of children and adolescents in 2008, 263 (65%) were admitted to adult units. 27 of those admitted to adult units were aged below 16 years⁴
- Nationally there are still only 3 public beds available for eating disorders
- The mental health needs of older people with intellectual disabilities are not being adequately addressed
- Continuing care for older people with mental disorders and/or challenging behaviour is not being adequately addressed
- The full range of acute and chronic needs in general psychiatry is not fully addressed in the strategy.
- The need for early intervention and step down facilities in forensic Mental Health services

A Vision for Change recommended that the proportion of the overall health budget allocated to mental health should consistently be in the region of 8%. This target has yet to be reached and in the current economic circumstances is most unlikely to be achieved in the near future.

The Vision for Change strategy does not articulate a role for the independent providers of mental health services despite the fact that the independent sector is the largest provider of mental health professional training in Ireland and is acknowledged as providing service to 19%⁵ of those requiring treatment.



There are opportunities to make faster progress in reaching the goals of Vision for Change through an active and constructive partnership between the public sector and the Independent sector. Early effective intervention in mental illness is vital and inclusion of the Independent sector can contribute significantly to achieving the goals of A Vision for Change.

The Independent Mental Health Services Providers Group is willing to examine relationship models with the HSE to develop and extend service level agreements in a range of areas including in-patient, community based, day and outreach services. The group can support the HSE to respond to emerging and existing service demands more rapidly than presently occurs. Through the combination of our collective services we possess the necessary critical mass to introduce new service developments on a safe, sustainable and cost effective basis.

Improved partnership and collaboration between the HSE and the Independent Hospital Group will provide;

- Improved outcomes for service users
- Faster access to specialist services
- Potential for reduced public sector investment
- Faster and more efficient introduction of new services
- Consistently high standards in service provision

The Independent Mental Health Services Providers would welcome a recommendation from the Independent Monitoring Group requiring a more proactive and constructive engagement with the Independent Providers in implementation of Vision for Change.

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¹ J. Saunders. Director IMHC. imt.ie 2nd June 2009

² Independent Monitoring Group for A Vision for Change (2008). Third Annual Report on Implementation April 2009

³ Mental Health Commission (2008). The Economics of Mental Health Care in Ireland

⁴ Child & Adolescent Mental Health services. 1st Annual Report. 2008, published October 2009

⁵ Activities of Irish Psychiatric Units and Hospitals 2007 Table 3.1 HRB statistics Series 5, table 3.1