



**College of Psychiatrists
of Ireland**

Wisdom • Learning • Compassion

2020 Budget Submission

**Without adequate clinical
staff resourcing a fit for
purpose Mental Health
Service for all is not
possible**

EAP Department October 2019

The College is the professional and training body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. The Mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of Psychiatry.

2020 Budget must Urgently Prioritise the Recruitment and Retention crisis

To provide a fit for purpose Mental Health Service for all

To deliver services at a basic level in the Mental Health Services to those with mental distress and illness an urgent plan to address the clinical staffing retention and recruitment crisis is required. This can only succeed with adequate fiscal allocation and non-transferable budgetary expenditure. It is essential to reverse the mass exodus of psychiatrists and other essential allied health professionals from our Mental Health Services and to re-attract and maintain the quality clinical staff from all necessary disciplines, both at community and hospital care level nationally, to our Mental Health Services. Without addressing this crisis, a recovery oriented, person centred service is not attainable for those vulnerable in society who badly need it. The economic burden of not doing this will increase. UK research shows that for every one pound invested four pounds are saved in the economy as a whole. We believe this applies in the Irish economy also.

While mental health services across the life span require adequate budgetary allocation, the two major cohorts whose mental health and quality of life are critically under pressure, due to well documented population growth, are the young and those in later life. Investment in the mental health needs of these two groups would bring immediate benefits to those with mental health problems and to their carers.

The College and Family Carers Ireland recently published the ['Paying the Price'](#) report following a national survey of carers. This follow up survey to one carried out ten years ago found alarming and increased levels of burden on carers of these groups. The cost of not investing in supports and care for those they care for also severely impacts negatively not just their quality of life, but their health overall. Diagnoses of anxiety and depression were found to be much more prevalent among carers than in the general population. Aside from the obvious human level of suffering that needs to be addressed this brings another layer of economic burden and loss of productivity to Irish society.

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland proposes the following:

1. Appropriate budgetary commitment to Mental Health Services

Immediate increase of the Mental Health Services budget to a minimum 12% of the overall Health Service budget in 2020. This should be separate to extra funding allocated each year for once off projects/capital expenditure.

2. Designate 25% of the budget to Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Begin with our children and adolescents to ensure better mental health outcomes for future generations. Regardless of investment, 2% of under 18s develop serious mental disorders and illness. Investment in early detection and intervention across the developmental trajectory of a young person is key to their longer term good mental health outcomes. This will also lessen the economic burden in the longer term, both in society and on mental

health services at community and hospital level. Funding for assessment, support, intervention and specialist services at all stages needs to be increased and prioritised to include raising resources to levels needed regularly highlighted and documented in the last few years.

Appropriate budgetary commitment will also ease the burden on carers

3. Mental health needs of our Later Life Population and their Carers

Immediate and continued resourcing of existing strategies and reports is vital for the health needs and quality of life of Irish citizens now in later life and for their carers, many of whom are also in the later life stage and suffering from the excessive burden of caring.

4. Urgent implementation of a Mental Health ICT system

A mental health services ICT (information and communication technology) system is essential to plan and deliver efficient, safe and supportive services. Sufficient budgetary and development planning, in phases if necessary, is required to facilitate: - communication between mental health professionals (both Psychiatry and Primary Care); communication between the system and patients/service users; development of adjunct tools, where appropriate, to enable flexible, alternative supports and services using digital technologies to be offered; audit and review to ensure efficient use of resources.

5. Reinstatement of a HSE Mental Health Director to lead and coordinate plans to ensure equality of access nationally to Mental Health Services

The College believes that the dissolution of the Mental Health Division and the lack of a National Director for Mental Health means that the necessary focus on Mental Health is lacking from the day to day planning and development of Health Services. This mis-step also sent out a negative message about the place of those with mental health problems in our health services. For progressive effective reform and development of mental health services, the role of a national Mental Health Director/Lead and a Mental Health Division are essential and should be reinstated with ring fenced and adequate funding.

Finally

Over ten years after the publication of the National Mental Health Policy, *A Vision for Change*, financial and philosophical commitments to the development of a world class mental health service lag far behind those envisioned in that document. This results in some of the most vulnerable people in Irish Society lacking the supports they need to realise their potential. The College continues to advocate for simple budgetary commitments to rectify this.

There are many other areas in need which have been referenced and advocated for in previous [pre budgets submissions\(see documents here\)](#) but unless the core areas identified above are addressed we will continue to go from crisis to crisis.