

Mental Health Commission welcomes the publication of the National Safeguarding Committee's Strategic Plan

Mental Health Commission's new remit of the Decision Support Service requires budget and resource allocation to scope, plan and implement it effectively

20th December 2016 The Mental Health Commission has welcomed the National Safeguarding Committee Strategic Plan which was launched today by Ms Justice Mary Laffoy. The Mental Health Commission forms part of the National Safeguarding Committee which aims to promote the rights of adults who may be vulnerable.

Commenting on the launch of the Strategic Plan, Patricia Gilheaney, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Commission said; "The role of the Mental Health Commission is to protect those who are most vulnerable in our society and to ensure that the right safeguards are in place. We welcome this strategic plan today and I look forward to collaborating with the committee members to deliver this plan over the next five years and ensure vulnerable people, receive protection."

The Mental Health Commission's remit extends beyond protecting those in approved centres, and to that end, there are recent important legislative changes taking effect. In 2015, the President enacted the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015. The Decision Support Service, under this Act, falls within the remit of the Commission.

Speaking about the Decision Support Service, John Saunders, Chairman of the Mental Health Commission said, "To date the Commission has not been allocated a budget or necessary resources to progress the detailed and complex planning required for the implementation of this legislation and operation of an effective Decision Support Service. In order for the Decision Support Service to work effectively when established, there are necessary actions that need to be taken immediately, such as detailed planning, preparation for and putting in place the necessary structures and systems and effective sequencing of implementation to ensure that the appropriate assisted decision making supports and regulatory oversight are put in place. The Commission looks forward to receiving details about the budget and resource allocation so that it can progress this important work."

"The Commission is committed to working with relevant government departments and other stakeholders to put the necessary infrastructure in place so the services can commence and be implemented smoothly and quickly," said Mr Saunders.

The National Safeguarding Committee was formed in 2015 as a supporting structure for the HSE Safeguarding Policy '*Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy and Procedures*' which was published in December 2014. The Strategic Plan will guide the work of the Committee for the next five years and it will be reviewed regularly.

ENDS

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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.