

Inspector of Mental Health Services Dr Patrick Devitt
Mental Health Commission,
St Martin's House,
Waterloo Road,
Dublin 4

Monday 24th August, 2009

Dear Dr Devitt,

I hope you are well.

I write as the representative of the Irish Association of Social Workers' adult mental health special interest group (SWAMH) to offer you a copy of the contents of a letter we wrote in response to your article in the Irish Times. See below:

"The Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW) welcomes Dr Devitt's Inspector of Mental Health Services' comments 10.8.09 regarding the need to put in place a Service Directorate to manage mental health services nationally. It is clear that over the past decades money from the sale of lands occupied by mental health services were not used to modernise mental health facilities. As a result many patients remain in poor facilities and are also starved of multidisciplinary professional input crucial to effective rehabilitation. IASW calls for the full implementation of all recommendations in "Vision for Change" mental health policy. We cannot understand the reason for the failure to date to implement this policy, particularly the non cost aspects such as full multidisciplinary and service user management teams. There appears to be reluctance on the part of some senior managers, to share responsibility for service delivery with trained service users, social work managers, psychology, and occupational therapy as recommended. We are not surprised at the annual criticism from the inspector of mental health services regarding the absence of a balanced multidisciplinary service and service user involvement. A National Service Directorate is crucial to service development and we urge all key stakeholders to push for the implementation of the recommendations in Vision for Change. "

SWAMH plans to meet the Junior Minister John Maloney in September and we will be raising this issue with him. SWAMH would be happy to meet with you, if we can be of assistance to you at any time in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Browne
Member of IASW Executive & SWAMH