



# Right to Mental Health

*A Vision for Change* was published in 2006, and functions as a national policy for reforming Ireland's mental health services by proposing changes to transform the way we think about mental health, and to improve the services available for those suffering from mental illnesses.

Mental health services continue to use 'coercive and restrictive practices like non-consensual psychiatric medication and electroshock' as methods for the treatment of patients, as permitted under the Mental Health Act 2000, and the UN Human Rights Committee has expressed its concern regarding the continuation of such practices. The Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2015 has recently restricted the circumstances in which patients admitted involuntarily may be treated on a compulsory basis.

Non-medication centred treatment and community housing choices are lacking for people with mental health difficulties, and staff are not appropriately trained in community care to deal with them accordingly. Additionally, Ireland's Mental Health Strategy has not been adequately resourced or fully implemented.

## **Recommendations**

*Train relevant healthcare staff on community-based care models and alternatives to non-consensual treatment, and adopt holistic approaches for treatment options*

*Involve persons concerned in decisions around community-based living*

*Fully implement and update Ireland's Mental Health Strategy including recommendations around social inclusion*

“When you go into a service, a service should be about options and when it comes to mental health in Ireland there are very few individualised options that people will get.”

-Participant, UPR consultation

## About Your Rights. Right Now

*Your Rights. Right Now* is a coalition of 17 Irish NGOs, trade unions and civil society groups established by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) in 2010 to coordinate the civil society response to Ireland's first examination under the Universal Periodic Review. This group was re-convened in 2015. The coalition conducted a number of general and thematic consultations and invited written submissions to inform its report which was submitted to the UN in September 2015.

Members of the coalition are:

- Age Action
- Educate Together
- Free Legal Advice Centres
- Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties
- Irish Family Planning Association
- Irish Penal Reform Trust
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Mercy Law Resource Centre
- NUI Galway, Centre for Disability Law and Policy
- Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland
- Union of Students in Ireland
- Disability Federation of Ireland

For more information see [www.rightsnow.ie](http://www.rightsnow.ie)

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### Update in Government Report

The report notes that “major reform of mental health legislation is underway following the publication of an Expert Group Review of the Mental Health Act 2001.”

Two amendments are highlighted regarding the administration of ECT and medicine (after a 3-month period), operational from 15 February 2016. The authority to administer ECT or medicine (after a 3-month period) to an involuntary patient with capacity who is unwilling to consent to the treatment will be removed.

The report notes *A Vision for Change* and the intention to draw up an updated and revised mental health policy in 2016.

A new suicide strategy, *Connecting for Life- Ireland's National Strategy to reduce Suicide 2015-2020* is noted and the adoption by the Strategy as a minimum target the WHO 2014 goal of a 10% reduction in the suicide rate. [para. 92-95]

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