

Petitioner submission of 13 October 2023

PE1871/M: Full review of mental health services

I would like to thank the committee for considering the petition and would like to thank all the submissions to date. I once again urge the committee to call for a review of the mental health services. I feel this is the only way we can determine what services are working and what services are draining money. Over the course of all submissions, I have not seen an evaluation of the suicide action plan 2018. I feel to determine what benefit the plan achieved it's important to carry out a review. From my experience, there seems to be a gap with what is written in policies and what transpires on the front line. From my own experience, there is still no support for people who have lost a loved one to suicide. However, the same goal and target from the 2018 plan is being proposed in the new plan. How has this target been met and where is the support? I would certainly take the opportunity to access this support if it was available.

I would like to note my concern on the new framework that has been proposed which states the delivery of mental health service will now fall onto the 3rd sector. This is deeply concerning as I do not feel this will be appropriate for people who are in crisis. People who are in crisis need professional intervention, however, they are being referred to volunteer lead organisations. I agree that peer support is a vital aspect of mental health and provides better service. However, I do not think this is appropriate for all cases. Mental health cannot have a universal service for all, we need a patient centred approach which I do not feel we have just now. Mental health has been a Cinderella service for many years and unless the issues is addressed, it will continue to deteriorate.

I would like to note that there are some services that are beneficial. My own GP practise is a good example of this. GPs are often the first response when it comes to mental health but only have a very short space of time to really tackle any of the issues. A referral would be made which impacts on the waiting times. However, in my own GP practice, we have a dual trained GPs/physiatrists. This allows the patients of the practice who are experiencing poor mental health to be assessed and the apparition care plan put in place. I feel if this could be replicated in other practices, it could really help toward better services. Therefore, I

would argue that to find good services like this, a review must be carried out.

I once again urge the committee to call for a review of mental health services.