

committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing needs for children, young people, adults and families offering counselling and therapeutic services.

PIPS (Public Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide and Self-

harm., www.pipsproject.com) aims to raise awareness and to educate; to provide support for those left behind and those at risk; and to encourage the community to develop a co-ordinated strategy in partnership with those concerned with emotional health and wellbeing.

Philanthropic Challenges

There is concern that public expenditure cuts will impact severely on the voluntary and community sector. It is anticipated that there will therefore be demand for financial support in order to maintain existing provision of a broad range of services across the sector. Furthermore there is little or no public sector support for the development of new services such as:

- ❖ further development of early intervention / social inclusion;
- ❖ approaches such as Social Prescribing e.g. community development programmes involving older people;
- ❖ initiatives to address stigma amongst vulnerable groups e.g. young men in rural areas.
- ❖ self Help and peer led education and support activity involving young people

Local community based and issue specific organisations can utilise small scale funding towards core costs and the development and provision of their services. There is continued need for research, lobbying and advocacy work, e.g. measuring mental health / well being; understanding of needs for minority ethnic groups

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¹ Committee For Health, Social Services And Public Safety Official Report. (Hansard) Presentation by the Minister on Departmental Spending Plans 28 January 2010.

² Figuring it Out: Looking behind the Social Statistics in Northern Ireland, ARK November 2009.

³ See Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability Website <http://www.rmhl.dni.gov.uk/index/published-reports.htm>

⁴ A Flourishing Society - Aspirations for Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, Niamh, 2009

Mental Health



Northern Ireland - Funders' Brief

- ❖ One in six of our population has a mental health need at any one time, Our mental health needs are 25% greater than in England, yet we spend 25% less to address them¹.
- ❖ According to ARK² Northern Ireland has inordinately high rates of mental ill-health, attributed generally to a combination of high rates of poverty and the impact of the conflict. In 2007 one in three people receiving Disability Living Allowance (some 3% of the population) were doing so for reasons of mental ill-health, a rate three times greater than in Britain.
- ❖ Demographic change anticipated could see the number of dementia sufferers rise by 30% by 2017 along with a likely increase in the number of older people with functional mental illness.

Context

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). In 2002 it initiated a major, wide-ranging and independent review of the law, policy and provision affecting people with mental health needs or a learning

disability in Northern Ireland. The Bamford Review (completed in 2007) brought together current state of knowledge on mental care in Northern Ireland, highlighted issues, and made a series of recommendations, in ten published reports³. It offered a vision for radical reform and modernisation of

legislation, policy and services which stimulated a policy response from Government and an Action Plan to improve mental health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland. The Bamford review highlighted the need for:

- ❖ Early Intervention
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Support for young people
- ❖ Research

Government has recognised that a 'culture shift in our thinking is required' – the Action Plan developed in response to the Bamford Review is based around 5 themes:

- ❖ Promoting positive mental health, wellbeing and early intervention
- ❖ Supporting people to lead independent lives
- ❖ Supporting carers and families
- ❖ Providing better services to meet the needs of individuals
- ❖ Developing structures and a legislative framework

The DHSSPS along with the Department of Education are the main funders of services provided various Health and Social Care Agencies, schools, and voluntary sector organisations. The Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) are responsible for the Regional Mental Health and Learning Disability Taskforce and Bamford Monitoring Group, which involve user and service providers, and were established to

operationalise the Bamford Action Plan.

Practice and Issues

The four key regional voluntary sector organisations in Northern Ireland are AMH (Action Mental Health), Mind Wise, Níamh (The Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health), and Praxis Care. They offer a range of services, mainly contracted by Health and Social Services Trusts.

AMH (www.amh.org.uk) focuses on the provision of training and support services and has been recognized through receiving national training awards.

Mind Wise (www.mindwisenv.org), which was established from the demerger of the Northern Ireland region Rethink, aims to combat stigma and discrimination, offers a range of recovery orientated services, and acts as a campaigning and lobbying 'voice'.

Níamh (www.niamh.co.uk) comprises three interlinked agencies (**Beacon, Carecall and Compass**), it provides residential and day care services as well as other support. Compass, the Níamh Centre for Mental Health Research and Policy, aims to bridge the mental health evidence gap by carrying out high quality research in

health promotion, epidemiology, evaluation of service delivery and the development of health and social care interventions. Its 2009 report⁴, commissioned by the Chief Medical Officer, reviewed progress on recommendations and interventions resulting from the Bamford Review and other relevant strategies (including the Mental Health Promotion Strategy and Protect Life). It offered advice and strategic direction and recommended:

- ❖ Consolidation and merging of strategies and of structures for implementation
- ❖ Investment in early years and targeting of specific sectors at high risk
- ❖ Investment in research and evaluation, with particular reference to the need for utilisation of population and targeted indicators to provide an appropriate evidence base and for measurement of impact.

Praxis Care

(www.praxisprovides.com), which according to its Chief Executive, Nevin Ringland, owes its existence to a timely grant from the Community Foundation in its early years, has evolved into Northern Ireland's largest charity, employing over 1,000 staff at locations in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, England and the Isle of Man. Nevin is adamant that the voluntary sector 'can do more for

less' (than the statutory sector) but would encourage funders to encourage collaboration in order to help ensure systematic innovation and collective learning.

In addition, there are a number of issue specific and local community based organisations which depend on support from a broad range of public and private funders. To give a flavour below are some examples of organisations that have applied to the Community Foundation in recent years – our funds have not been able to stretch to reach them all.

Aware Defeat Depression (www.aware-ni.org) offers help-line services and training, and runs a network of some 20 local support groups across Northern Ireland.

CAUSE (www.cause.org.uk) is a peer-led charity in Northern Ireland directed and staffed by past and present carers. Providing practical and emotional support to relatives and carers of people with serious mental illness.

The Níamh Louise Foundation (www.niamhlouisefoundation.com) aims to promote positive mental and emotional health and remove stigma attached to suicide and self harm.

New Life Counselling (www.newlifecounselling.net) is