

Statement of Support

European Pact for Mental Health and Well Being

Date: 08/09/2010

European Social Network Social Services in Europe

ESN is the independent network for social services in Europe. Our mission is to help change the lives of the most vulnerable in society through the delivery of quality social services. We bring together the people who are key to the design and delivery of vital care and support at the local level to learn from each other and contribute their experience and expertise to building effective European and national social policy.



European Social Network (ESN) supports the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing and is committed to contribute to its implementation. ESN, as a network for local public social services, welcomes the opportunity to be involved in the Pact recognising that mental health is not only an issue for health but also for social services.

Mental health has been a cross cutting issue in other policy work carried out by ESN and the organisation has previously worked in the area of mental health through the seminar “Building partnerships in mental health for economic and social integration” (Madrid, 2009).

In 2010, ESN launched a new working group on Mental Health as part of ESN policy and practice programme 2010/11.

The Group is composed of directors of local health and social services, policy makers, and researchers from 8 different European countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and the UK).

The aim of the Group is to enhance mutual learning around the implementation of policy and practice to improve people’s wellbeing, feed this learning into the activities that the European Commission is organising in the framework of the Pact, and contribute to the improvement of the quality of mental health services and the dissemination of good practice.

Re-evaluating social services in the promotion of mental health in light of the 5 areas defined by the Pact, the ESN working group has identified the following issues as cross-cutting:

1. Translating rights and values in mental health into action
2. Promoting the voice of people and families who have experience of using mental health services
3. Building strategic planning and strengthening cooperation amongst sectors and services including health, social, education, employment and housing
4. Ensuring professional assessment of needs of users
5. Developing personalized care and support through a range of community based services
6. Promoting training and education activities/campaigns to raise awareness and educate people working in services across sectors (health, social, etc.)
7. Building the economic case for investment in mental health and monitoring of outcomes of particular actions
8. The need of a shared vision of mental health across the EU.

Local social and health services have a vital role for people with mental health problems to provide support and empowerment.

In most countries, health and social services have the legal duty to protect people with mental health problems and to provide appropriate care, upholding values of respect, professionalism and responsibility. However, the division between health and social services can sometimes be a barrier to the effective provision of care for people with mental health conditions.

ESN believes that local health and social services together have a wider impact on people's well being and they improve life chances of those suffering from mental health conditions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JH.', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Halloran
Chief Executive