

It is vital that an independent, statutory body is established in the mental health sector that allows complaints from anyone using services, including peer workers and carer consultants, particularly for those who have no voice, in order to create change and resolution of issues.

There urgently needs to be a change of culture in the sector towards an overall understanding of the needs of those most in need, not only in the community, but within health and mental health services – particularly to address the 25 year reduced life expectancy of people with schizophrenia, most of whom are seen by health professionals.

There are barriers which need to be overcome for this cohort of the population rather than the current practice of further marginalisation by support services in the name of “recovery” oriented service provision, such as lack of insight, cognitive impairment and fear of retribution, discrimination, etc.

Families, particularly ageing parents, are overburdened by the care and support they are having to provide due to the lack of services being provided to their loved ones.

People with severe mental illness and psychosocial disabilities are NOT being given the support they urgently require to enable them to become participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This urgently needs to be addressed and there needs to be outreach to the community, so that this cohort of the population can take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Mental health services need to focus on people with severe mental illness, as there are now many programs available in the community which can be accessed by a GP, for those with less severe mental illnesses, and via the Primary Health Networks, such as IPRSS, HASP, New Access, LETSS telephone services, etc.

Pat Sutton, April 2019