

Financial Accountability - Factsheet

One of our objectives in this two-year campaign is that people directly affected by human rights in relation to mental health can hold Government to account for its obligations under international human rights law.

Currently there are limited mechanisms in Ireland for tracking mental health expenditure or its effectiveness. Yet accountability is a fundamental principle of human rights.

Funds expended on mental health services must be tracked and reported by the HSE and the Department of Health and Children and this information made available to civil society

As a first step towards achieving this objective, AI commissioned the consultants Indecon to review expenditure on mental health since 2006.

The right to the highest attainable standard of mental health is subject to progressive realisation and resource constraints. States are required to take steps to the maximum of their available resources with a view to realising the right over time. Simply put, this means Ireland must be doing better today than it was five years ago.

In human rights terms, accountability goes beyond ensuring that funds are spent as intended; there must also be some demonstration that this money is spent effectively and efficiently.

From 2006 to 2007, Government invested an additional €51.2 million of development funding that was intended to support implementation of *A Vision for Change*. Yet in January of 2008, the Irish Mental Health Coalition discovered that almost half of this money had been diverted to meet deficits in other areas of health spending.

The Indecon report found that the Health Service Executive (HSE) cannot explain how its mental health budget is being spent because of major gaps in its financial accounting processes. Even where the money is accounted for, there are inadequate mechanisms in place to measure how effectively it is being spent.

The Indecon report found that despite repeated commitments to move to a community-based model of mental health care, only 19 per cent of mental health staff within the HSE are currently working in community services. The majority of staff continue to be deployed in old institutional settings that do not represent the best value for money and which indicates that the HSE's implementation of the Government's 2006 mental health policy *A Vision for Change*, is severely off-target.