



Press Release

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EU INVEST €7.6 MILLION IN MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY

Three cross border recovery college networks to be set-up to support people with mental health difficulties.

A €7.6 million EU INTERREG VA funded cross-border project has been launched in response to the increase in numbers of people with mental health problems. Over the next four years, the large-scale, cross border Innovation Recovery project offers an unprecedented opportunity to empower and enable people and communities to take greater control over their own mental and emotional wellbeing.

This EU funding allocation has been secured by the Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) Health and Social Care Partnership. The CAWT project partners are the HSE, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is also a project partner.

The recovery colleges will provide education as a route to recovery, with courses devised and delivered collaboratively by people with their own experience of mental illness along with mental health professionals. By adopting this educational approach, alongside or as an alternative to more traditional therapeutic options, it is planned that those participating will be enabled to better understand their mental health. Ultimately, people will be supported to recover and to be able to create a satisfying and meaningful life for themselves.

Jim Daly TD, Minister for Mental Health and Older People at the Department of Health in Ireland and Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Health in Northern Ireland jointly announced the launch of this cross border initiative at an event in Dundalk today.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Daly said: **“This is an important EU funded project which is taking a cross border approach to developing additional support services for those with mental health difficulties and I congratulate the CAWT partnership for securing the EU funding.”**



He added: **“The Innovation Recovery initiative is taking a community-based approach by supporting people to better understand and manage their mental health within their own localities. The recovery ethos is one which the Department wholeheartedly embraces and is reflected in current policy and practice.”**

Also speaking at the event, Dr McBride added: **“The Department is delighted to be launching this cross border mental health project. The aims and objectives of the project chimes with our priorities for a modern health and social care service, in particular the focus on early intervention and self-management. It is about giving people the tools and support to identify their needs in recovering from and managing their own mental health. It encourages participants to draw upon both their own personal resources and the support of the wider community.”**

Welcoming the launch of the Innovation Recovery project, Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“Improving access to more effective joined-up health and social care services for citizens, is one of the core objectives of the EU’s INTERREG VA Programme and will benefit thousands of people on a cross-border basis. This project represents a radical shift from traditional models of treatment for those with mental health problems, to a more collaborative-based approach that will allow people, on both sides of the border, to become active partners in their journey to recovery. She added: “It will also help challenge the silence and stigma that unfortunately prevents many people from coming forward to receive the help and support that they need.”**

Project Chair, John Meehan, Assistant National Director at the HSE and Head of National Office for Suicide Prevention said: **“The Innovation Recovery project complements and enhances mental health services delivered by the HSE and our community and voluntary partners, by empowering and supporting individuals and their families and the wider community through a learning, educational approach. At the heart of the recovery college approach is that the participants engage with and learn alongside those who have experienced similar mental health issues.”**

Damien McCallion, National Director Emergency Management & CAWT Director General of CAWT opened the launch. Other speakers at the launch event included Michael Ryan, Service Improvement Lead, HSE; Briege McClean, Peer Trainer, WHSCT and John McCormack, Scottish Recovery Network.



- ENDS.

**For more information please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager
with the SEUPB on Mob. 07834 778018 or via e-mail john.mccandless@seupb.eu**

Notes to Editor:

SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu