

Strategic plan report

Summary

2020 - 2025



PEER ADVOCACY
IN MENTAL HEALTH

FINDING YOUR VOICE, DISCOVERING HOPE

Introduction

1.1 The Irish Advocacy Network Historical Context

The Irish Advocacy Network was established in 1999 when some 270 individuals from across Ireland with experience of mental health challenges came together with the purpose of creating a representative voice for service users. Irish Advocacy network was established by grass roots activists who strongly believed that peer advocacy should be independent and provided by people who have direct experience of using mental health services.

IAN (Irish Advocacy Network) developed the concept of peer advocacy across Ireland and fostered the concept of recovery. IAN provides paid jobs and training opportunities to people with experience of mental health problems. This is something IAN is proud of and continues to promote.

IAN provides an Island wide service, operating both in the Republic of Ireland and also in Northern Ireland within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust developing strategic partnerships and alliances in cross border health services. IAN was involved in introducing the concept of peer advocacy and support in several areas of Ireland and was heavily involved in research and in-depth information gathering to inform the future of services and professional practice.

IAN used its experience and expertise to provide training and information to a number of audiences and partner organisations.

IAN contributed and inputted towards Island wide policy and legislative developments.

Through the facilitation of service user empowerment, IAN has supported people to speak up, speak out and regain control of their lives. This work will continue as IAN moves into its new phase as Peer Advocacy in Mental Health (PAMH). Peer Advocacy in Mental Health (PAMH) uses self-experience of mental/emotional health challenges to help understand peers in their journey of recovery and support them to reclaim their rightful place in the community. The organisation believes peer-advocacy has a unique role to play in accompanying citizens experiencing mental/emotional distress on this journey. PAMH is committed to adapting to new challenges to health care services, practices, and transformations within communities by establishing strategic partnerships and alliances.

1.2 Overall Context

Service Offering: Based in Dublin, PAMH operates a free and confidential Peer Advocacy service on an Island wide basis. The organisation uses a self-referral system, with clients approaching peer advocates of their own volition. PAMH offers accredited training and development for Peer Advocates and in self-advocacy. PAMH is also a member of various working groups and committees that inform policy on mental health in Ireland.

Clients: PAMH serves individuals experiencing mental health challenges. This includes clients in acute care/long stay units' clients in community residences, and those in the community.

Social Context: In a 2018, Ireland ranked joint third for the highest rates of mental health illness in Europe, with some 18.5 per cent of the Irish population reported to have a mental health disorder in 2016, according to the annual Health at a Glance report¹. Mental health remains a priority on the national agenda at policy level and a focus of public discussion.

Policy Context: Ireland has experienced significant mental health reform in the last two decades, with the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 designed to protect and empower people who may lack the mental capacity for independent decision-making to make their own decisions about their care and treatment. The Mental Health Act (2001) defines who may be admitted to a psychiatric hospital and why. It sets out the rights of psychiatric patients and seeks to uphold the best interest of the patient. Under the Act, the Mental Health Commission was formed to protect the interests of those who reside in psychiatric centres. Sharing the Vision has become the new Policy context for Mental Health provision in Ireland. This policy is welcomed although for it to be realised it needs to be fully resourced.

¹ OECD, 2018, *Health at a Glance: Europe 2018*

1.3 Strategic Process

In response to the identified challenges in PAMH (previously IAN), a strategic planning process was facilitated by external consultancy 2into3. PAMH established a Strategy Steering Committee to oversee the strategic planning process and ensure its full implementation. The strategic planning process ensured representation from internal and external stakeholders: clients, service providers and staff. Three full-day workshops were interspersed with Steering Committee meetings during the undertaking of the strategic planning process.

2. What Peer Advocacy in Mental Health Stands For



2.1 Our Core Values

- **Person-Centred**
- **Respect**
- **Empathy**
- **Support**
- **Non-Judgemental**
- **Authentic**

2.2 Our Vision

**Where everyone
experiencing
Mental Health
Challenges
feels
empowered to
create their
own futures**

2.3 Our Mission

To be an Island wide, independent, peer-run, peer-led, organisation that empowers people experiencing mental health challenges to improve the quality of their lives through advocacy, support, training, and development

3. Goals 2020-2025

Goals: Impact, Sustainability, Positioning

After conducting a thorough organisational diagnostic, which provided insight into the capacity of the staff, funding model and service-user experience, using SWOT analysis and existing feedback. Specific Goals were identified from which Peer Advocacy in Mental Health were to focus upon. These **goals** set out below, followed by their **strategic priorities** with **objectives and milestones**.

3.1 Impact Goals

- To build capacity to provide support on an island-wide basis by 2025
- To provide support to all those experiencing mental health challenges by 2025
- To offer free island-wide training for self-advocacy by 2025
- To provide a range of tripartite learning and support programmes involving service users, carers/family members and staff from partnership organisations

3.2 Sustainability Goals

- To double funding by 2025
- To secure 1/3 of funding from new sources
- To have 6 months reserves
- To have 20% of funding unrestricted
- To expand Board to 7-9 members with skills serving the organisation's mission by 2020
- To move HR and finance roles in-house by 2020

3.3 Positioning Goals

- To consider the identity of the organisation and its ability to communicate with all stakeholders by 2020

4. Strategic Objectives

We partnered with 2into3 who identified several integrated areas in which to consider strategic options and investment in order to build the capacity of Peer Advocacy in Mental Health so that the desired goals may be achieved by 2025. This strategy is a five-year plan to bring Peer Advocacy in Mental Health to a level of sustainability such that the organisation may give its undivided attention to providing peer advocacy to service users and achieving its new mission.

4.1 Strategic Objective 4: Programme Investment

In order to provide support to all those experiencing mental health challenges by 2025, the Steering Committee at PAMH identified a significant need to invest in programmes in order to meet the needs of both existing and potential service users and expand the organisation's reach. This will entail increasing office support as well as the number of Peer Advocates operating across Ireland and training new peer advocates.

Projects	Details
Office Support:	In order to expand the range of groups and services PAMH can support, particularly those in community and long-stay accommodation, additional capacity is required in the form of office support.
More Peer Advocates:	There are currently 15 Peer Advocates working for Peer Advocacy in Mental Health. To meet the growing demand for Peer Advocacy it will be necessary to invest in growing the number of Peer Advocates within the organisation. The Steering Committee identified areas of geographic need which they will focus on assigning Peer Advocates, as well as any county without an acute unit.
Training Peer Advocates:	The Steering Committee recognised that in order to attract and retain new Peer Advocates with self-lived experience of mental health challenges, Peer Advocacy in Mental Health must promote itself through presentations and training to prospective peer advocates. Additional capacity is also required in running training, with Peer Advocacy in Mental Health identifying the need to put in place a training team, with one member of the training team in each region, supporting the current Training Officer.

4.2 Strategic Objective 2: Diversify & Increase Funding

Funding has posed one of the main challenges to Peer Advocacy in Mental Health. In order to meet its sustainability goals and remain an independent, island-wide service, Peer Advocacy in Mental Health will seek out philanthropic income for the organisation, as well as grants from new state sources.

Projects	Details
Philanthropy:	In order to remain independent and diversify its income, Peer Advocacy in Mental Health will explore philanthropic opportunities, such as applying for grants from charitable trusts and foundations.
New state sources:	Peer Advocacy in Mental Health will seek out new sources of statutory income by approaching other agencies, such as the Department of Justice, as well as seeking cross-border and EU funding.
Increase existing funding:	Peer Advocacy in Mental Health will seek to increase income from existing sources, including the HSE, Belfast Trust and training income.

4.3 Strategic Objective 3: Organisation Capacity

Peer Advocacy in Mental Health's Steering Committee recognised a need to increase the organisation's human capital and thus its capacity overall.

Peer Advocacy in Mental Health will increase its capacity through the creation of the following new roles, HR, Finance, Head of Services, Digital Marketing and Fundraising Assistant.

Peer Advocacy in Mental Health will look at increasing the capacity of the Board by 3 new Board members.

4.4 Strategic Priority 4: Identity Review

In order to meet the identified goal to consider the identity of the organisation and its ability to communicate with all key stakeholders, by 2020, Peer Advocacy in Mental Health conducted a review exploring its identity, specifically the name 'Irish Advocacy Network CLG'.

The new identity of IAN is now Peer Advocacy in Mental Health.



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