An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

# Embedding ‘Personal and Public Involvement’ in integrated mental healthcare: From policy commitment to practice

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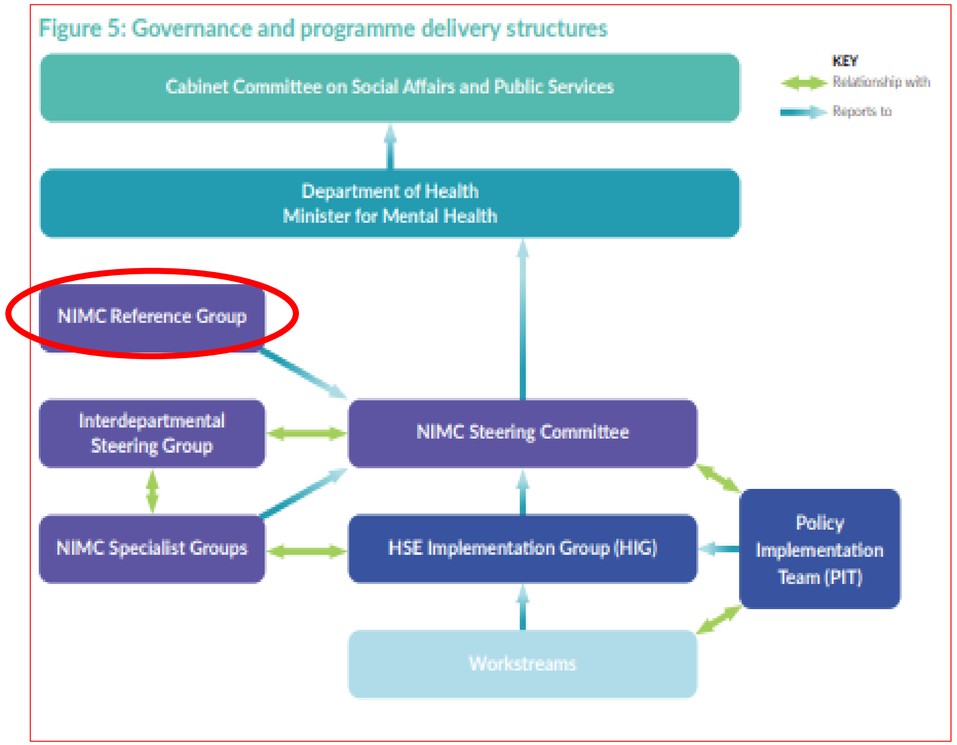
# Lived Experience

- Ireland has been an **exemplar in including lived experience experts** in policymaking in mental health.
- A **WHO roadmap; Transforming Mental Health through Lived Experience** was launched in July 2025.
- A **dedicated office** in the Irish health services focuses on  including lived experience expertise through:
    - recovery initiatives;
    - mental health engagement; and
    - workforce development.
- A **National Lived Experience Awareness Day** was launched by Minister Butler on 15 October 2025

# Sharing the Vision - Lived Experience Involvement

- The **active participation** of service users, families, carers and supporters in all aspects of mental health service improvement is an integral part of *Sharing the Vision.*
- This is **reflected in the service delivery principles -** Valuing and learning, Trauma informed, Recovery and Human Rights
- The **Governance Structures** reflect this with the Reference Group of Service Users and Family Members that review implementation progress and provides input  from a lived experience perspective.
- One **member of the NIMC Steering Committee with lived experience** was recruited in 2024 to enhance the scope of expertise and deepen the input of lived experience in policy implementation.
- The HSE's Mental Health Engagement and Recovery Office has established a **National Volunteer Lived Experience Panel** to **support policy implementation** at a national level. There are 40 active volunteers currently involved in this panel who provide input to the implementation of many of the Recommendations.



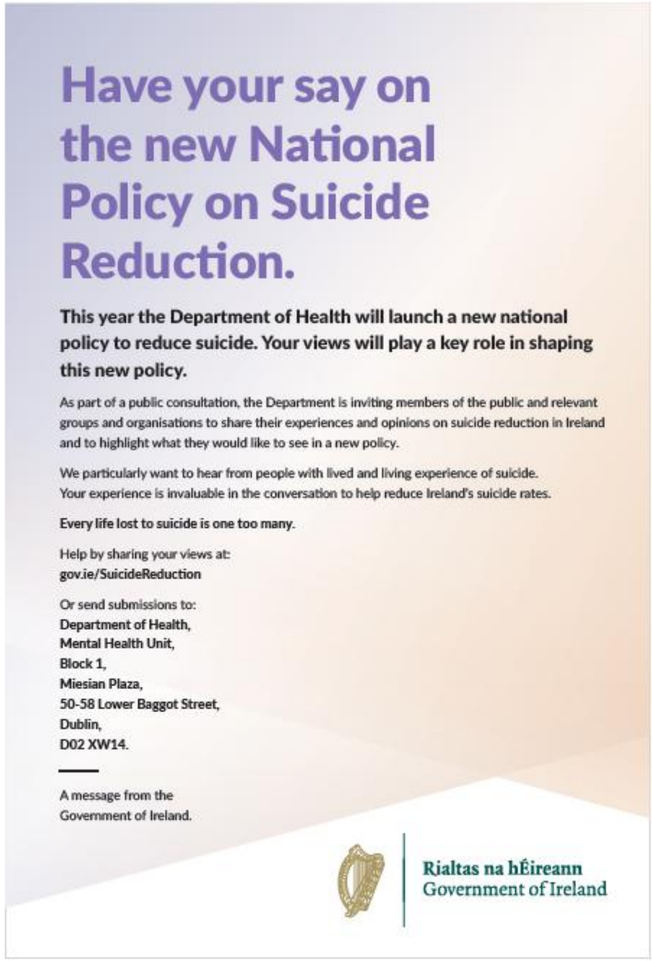

Sharing the Vision Implementation Governance Structure incl. Reference Group

# Public consultation to develop new suicide and self-harm reduction strategy

- Radio, print and social campaign. Significant stakeholder engagement
- **1,895** responses to online survey
- **7** in-person/online sessions
- Voice of lived experience is central

*"I felt heard and seen in my particular experience and am honoured to be part of the democratic process of developing the policy further. I was glad to learn that we all share such similar goals and especially hearing (in the summaries) from other people of the neurodivergent community, so I didn't feel like the 'only voice in the wilderness' Thank you all who made this possible!"*

*Lived Experience Participant*



*"The lived experience voice should be an integral part of any governmental suicide reduction strategy to ensure stakeholders are always learning and developing the most robust yet kind and compassionate system possible. We give our time willingly in the hope that others might avoid unnecessary suffering and with time, care and attention it will encourage healing in today's complex and challenging world."*

Member of the Lived Experience Reference Group for the development of the strategy

# Lived Experience Reference Group to develop new suicide and self-harm reduction strategy

- Recruited as part of extensive public consultation
- Eleven members
- Experience of suicidal behaviour/self-harm
- Experience of suicide bereavement
- Experience of supporting a friend or family member through suicidal behaviour
- Role is to work with Expert Advisory Group to produce recommendations for new strategy
- Also advise on language and design of new strategy
- Chair sits on Expert Advisory Group
- Supported by Dept Health (administration) & National Suicide Research Foundation (Psychological and practical support)
- A similar group will support implementation of the strategy to ensure lived experience is embedded through out policy process

# What enabled impact at *system* level

- Supported at overarching health policy level through Sláintecare.
- Senior leadership and Minister for Mental Health supported direct engagement.
- Psychological safety established for all.
- Dept Health staff empowered to directly engage with people with lived experience.
- Lived experience structure written into policy documents.
- Lived Experience groups externally supported by NGOs.