



Information about the Local Forum

Mental Health Engagement



The National Office for Mental Health Engagement has prepared this booklet to explain the Purpose of a Local Forum, why you should get involved and answer some Frequently Asked Questions.



HSE Mental Health Services

Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service

Introduction

This is a short introduction, with a number of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), about the Mental Health Engagement Local Forums.

This booklet begins with a short background on the Forums and answers the following questions:

- **What is a Local Forum?**
- **What is the purpose of a Local Forum?**
- **Who can join the Local Forum?**
- **What happens at a Local Forum? What do you talk about?**
- **What are the principles of the Local Forum?**
- **Where can I find more information on Local Forums in my area?**
- **How does the Local Forum deal with confidentiality?**
- **What do I need to know about Garda Vetting?**



Short background

The HSE mental health services are focusing more on working actively with service users, family members, carers and supporters.

The HSE established a group of service users, family members and carers to report and recommend on how to include and use service users' and supporters' experiences to improve services. Their recommendations were set out in a report called *Partnership for Change*.

The Group recommended Local Forums as a way to involve service users, family members, carers and supporters and to hear their views and experiences. They also recommended that an Area Lead be employed in nine areas across the country to set up Local Forums and to promote the involvement of service users, family members, carers and supporters in the design and delivery of the mental health services.

You will find additional information on the last page of this booklet and a Mental Health Engagement structures diagram can be seen on the back cover.

What is the Local Forum?

The Local Forum is an open monthly meeting. It is for people with connections to the mental health services. It is a place to speak about experiences, present views and raise matters of importance to improve the services for everyone.

What is the purpose of a Local Forum?

The purpose is to engage and work in partnership to improve the mental health services. This will allow service providers to respond to matters of importance raised by service users and their supporters and work together to resolve these matters.

Who can join the Local Forum?

To join a Local Forum, you should have your own lived experience of mental health difficulties or be a family member, carer or supporter of a person with mental health difficulties. Local Forum meetings are open and held monthly. You should be committed to attending meetings on a regular basis, if you can.

What happens at a Local Forum? What do you talk about?

As each meeting is opened, the Chair will outline the *Terms of Reference* and *Support Agreement*, as agreed by the group, and outline the meeting Agenda. You will work through the Agenda which will include

- Updates on active action items, where appropriate.
- Personal observations, views and experiences.
- Feedback from Forum attendees on items brought for consultation from a number of possible sources, including service providers.

The Local Forum is not the place in which to make a complaint. If you wish to make a complaint, we will direct you to *Your Service Your Say*, the HSE way to make a comment, compliment or complaint.

What are the principles of the Local Forum?

All Forums should operate on the following guiding principles:

- Respect always for each attendee's views and positions.
- Courteous behaviour.
- Compromise and consensus.
- Partnership.
- Care for each other's well-being.



Where can I find information on Local Forums in my area?

If you wish to learn more about the Local Forums in your area, please go to the Mental Health Engagement section of the HSE website - www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/mentalhealthengagement/

Under *Upcoming Events* you will find the details for Local Forums in locations throughout the country. You will also find contact details for the Mental Health Engagement Area Lead in each area. The Area Lead can provide you with further information about the Local Forums in your area if you have questions.

How does the Local Forum deal with confidentiality?

As a member of a Local Forum, you will share and hear personal information. It is important that you do not share this information outside of the Forum. Confidentiality is part of the *Support Agreement* that is agreed by forum members at the beginning of every Local Forum meeting.

What do I need to know about Garda Vetting?

You **do not** need to be Garda Vetted to be a member of a Local Forum. **However**, if you wish to take on the role of Chair or Secretary or take on HSE activities where you may come into contact with vulnerable adults or children, you will be asked to make an application to be vetted.

Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2012 to 2016), any person whose work or activity involves access to children or vulnerable persons must be vetted. You can apply online or through an application form.

Additional Information

If you wish to learn more about Mental Health Engagement please go to the Mental Health Engagement section of the HSE website- www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/mentalhealthengagement/

On that website, you will find information on Mental Health Engagement and Local Forums as well as links to publications such as *Partnership for Change – Report of the Mental Health Reference Group* and the *Family, Carer and Supporter Guide*.

You can also access our *eNewsletter* on this webpage.

National Office Contact Details

Mental Health Engagement Office (Working with People who use Mental Health Services, their Family Members, Carers and Supporters)

HSE, St Loman's Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin 20. D20 HK69

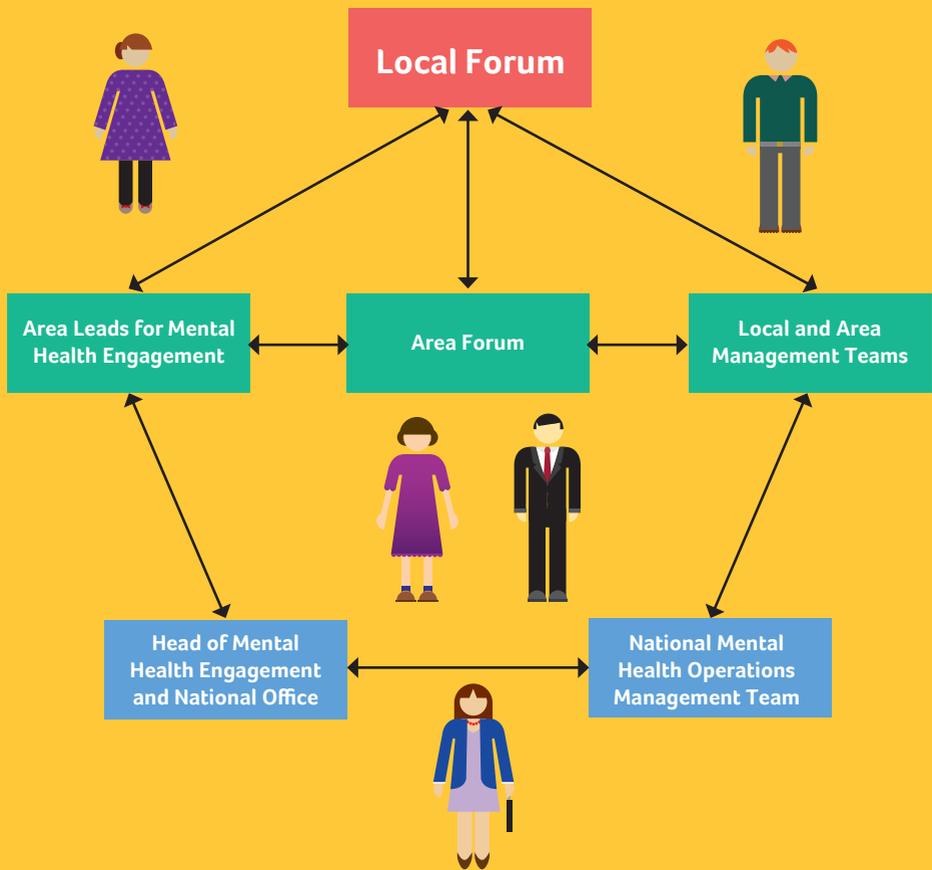
Tel: +353 (0)1 620 7339

Email: mhengage@hse.ie

Web: www.hse.ie/mentalhealthengagement



Mental Health Engagement Structures



Local Information