



## **Press Release**

**18 August 2010**

### **CLEAR Standards for Community Groups Launched**

New Service Standards and Quality Assessment Framework for community and voluntary organisations who work in the fields of suicide prevention and mental health were launched today in the Tara Centre in Omagh.

The standards were developed by the CLEAR project, a partnership of community and voluntary sector agencies funded by the Public Health Agency and managed by Derry Healthy Cities.

Welcoming the launch, Shauna Houston, CLEAR Project Manager, said: “In developing these standards the CLEAR Project has set out the minimum quality standard to which community and voluntary organisations should work in terms of their governance structures, service user involvement, privacy and confidentiality, knowledge and skills and service delivery. By providing support to community and voluntary organisations in meeting the needs of their clients CLEAR can continue to offer developmental opportunities to agencies providing mental health and emotional well being services. These standards, developed following extensive consultation and research, enable us to provide assurances on the high standards of service provision in the west”.

The CLEAR Project was commissioned as an integrated community development project as part of “Protect Life”, the Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy (2006) which aims to reduce the suicide rate in Northern Ireland. As part of this strategy the Public Health Agency funds a range of initiatives across Northern Ireland.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Eddie Rooney, announced: “I am delighted to be able to confirm that a further £80K in funding, available from the Public Health Agency through the Suicide Prevention Strategy - Protect Life, will be administered by the CLEAR project in the Western area. This sustains the community-led approach adopted by CLEAR over the past 4 years which has proved to be very positive for community and voluntary groups in the west giving them a real sense of empowerment in the process.

“The Public Health Agency is committed to further strengthening the excellent work carried out by the community and voluntary sector. Suicide prevention, like many other health related areas, cannot be addressed by the Public Health Agency or

health alone. Our success depends on the excellent joint working arrangements we have with our partners in the wider community and voluntary sectors. These standards will provide us with assurances of the standard of service delivered by the many professionals involved across the Western area”.

Dr. Rooney confirmed the Minister of Health, Michael McGimpsey’s support for the project and stated that although the standards were designed for groups working in the field of suicide prevention and mental health that they were “equally applicable to other areas of service provision”.

The grants process, which will involve CLEAR bringing together an independent panel to assess the grants and make the funding awards, is specifically aimed at enabling community and voluntary sector organisations to build their capacity, skills and support staff to meet agreed clinical governance and quality assurance standards or to enhance service delivery where the standards are already in place. The programme consists of two funding streams. The Development Fund awards grants of up to £5,000 to support groups in implementing the recommendations of the Quality Assurance Standards. The Service Support Fund awards grants of up to £7,500 to support groups who have already implemented the standards and wish to address demand and waiting list issues.

Today’s launch event featured contributions from a number of community and voluntary agencies who have adopted the standards including Arc Healthy Living Centre, Mannix Magee, Co-ordinator, Solace, Gráinne McClean, Executive Director, Rural Support and Conor McCafferty, ZEST.

A range of training and support is offered through the CLEAR project to assist community and voluntary organisations in meeting the standards. For further information please contact Shauna Houston, CLEAR Project Manager, on 028 8225 3953 or via email at [shauna@derryhc.com](mailto:shauna@derryhc.com). Further information on the work of the CLEAR Project can be accessed at [www.clearproject.co.uk](http://www.clearproject.co.uk).

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**For further information on the CLEAR Project contact:**

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