

## Imagine a world where...

- Every young person has a meaningful life and can fulfil their hopes and dreams
- All young people are respected, valued and supported by their families, friends and communities
- Young people feel empowered to exercise their right to participate in decisions that affect them
- Young people with mental ill-health get the support and care they need when and where they need it
- No young person with mental ill-health has to endure stigma, prejudice and discrimination
- The role of family and friends in supporting young people is valued and encouraged

## Background to the Declaration

The International Declaration on Youth Mental Health evolved from a Youth Mental Health Summit that took place in Killarney, Ireland on 19th May 2010. The Summit provided a forum for young people, family members, clinicians, researchers and policy makers to share practice innovation and research in the field of youth mental and to discuss and debate the content of this Declaration. Over 80 people from Ireland, the UK, Australia, Canada, the USA, the Netherlands and New Zealand took part in the process and their feedback and input provided the basis of the Declaration. The foreword of the Declaration was written by a young person and a number of young people have contributed their views on the Declaration over the writing period. The writing group was primarily made up of members of the ACAMH Special Interest Group in Youth Mental Health, Ireland.

The writing group for the first edition of the Declaration included:

Sarah Buckley (Ireland)  
Mary Cannon (Ireland)  
Derek Chambers (Ireland)  
Helen Coughlan (Ireland)  
Marie Duffy (Ireland)  
Blanaid Gavin (Ireland)  
Helen Keeley (Ireland)  
Patrick McGorry (Australia)  
Paddy Power (Ireland)  
David Shiers (UK)

### Further Information:

Ms. Ingrid King, Executive Director, The Association for Child & Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH):  
e-mail: [ingrid.king@acamh.org.uk](mailto:ingrid.king@acamh.org.uk)

Copies of the Declaration are available to download from the Inspire Ireland Foundation website:  
web: [www.inspireireland.ie](http://www.inspireireland.ie)

# The International Declaration on Youth Mental Health Summary

The **International Declaration on Youth Mental Health (2011)** sets out a shared vision, principles and action plan for mental health service provision for young people aged 12-25 years

# Why have an International Declaration on Youth Mental Health?

*"International declarations that articulate core values, goals and standards have played an important role in enhancing the quality of care in a number of areas of medicine" (Bertolote & McGorry 2005)*

The World Health Organisation (2011) recognises mental health as one of the main health issues affecting young people around the world today. At any one time up to one in four young people aged 12-25 years will be going through a period of mental ill-health and three-quarters of adults with mental health difficulties are likely to have developed those difficulties by the age of 24 (Kessler *et al* 2005).

Inspired by the Early Psychosis Declaration (2005), the International Declaration on Youth Mental Health (2011) articulates core principles and targets for youth mental health service provision. The Declaration aims to influence how people think about and respond to young people's mental health needs and will be used to leverage support for the development of timely and appropriate youth mental health services internationally.

The Declaration sets out a range of measurable targets that can be achieved over a ten year period. The targets reflect 5 key objectives for action:

- Engage young people & their families meaningfully in service development
- Improve understanding of youth mental health within communities
- Ensure access to youth friendly services and support
- Embrace a youth-focused, strengths based ethos of care
- Focus on resilience, hope and recovery

## Young People Say...

"The International Declaration on Youth Mental Health is of international significance and must be supported by all who value the contribution that young people make to our communities. Improving mental health care for young people and changing the way people think about mental health worldwide is our key to change."

"Across the world common experiences of youth mental health services are either having no access to services or long waiting lists for services where young people feel alienated and out of place once they get through the door. Poor access to quality services and supports are hindering young people's ability to fully participate as active participants in society."

"We are ready to engage in services and organisations to make our voices heard and be valued. Who could be more expert than the people who live through these things every day? How could services be redesigned, or stigma reduced without the guidance of such experts?"

## 10-year Targets

1. Every young person will know ways to stay mentally healthy, how to recognise mental ill-health and how to access help when they need it
2. 100% of young people with mental ill-health will be able to access specialist mental health assessment and intervention in youth-friendly locations
3. 100% of young people who seek mental health support will report feeling no stigma or shame

4. 100% of youth mental health services will be able to demonstrate evidence of engaging young people and families in the development of those services
5. Specialist assessment and intervention will be immediately accessible to every young person who urgently needs them
6. 100% of young people who require specialist intervention between the ages of 12-25 years will experience continuity of care as they make the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood
7. The waiting time for access to specialist mental health services will be less than 4 weeks
8. Access to high quality mental health services will not be prejudiced by whether a young person can afford to pay for the service or not
9. 90% of young people will report satisfaction with the choice and experience of the range of interventions offered to them
10. 90% of families will report satisfaction that they felt respected and valued as partners in care
11. 90% of young people will report being engaged in meaningful educational, vocational or social activity 2 years after first accessing specialist mental health intervention and support.
12. Suicide rates for young people will have reduced by a minimum of 50%
13. 100% of primary care services will have a youth mental health assessment protocol
14. 100% of community agencies, working routinely with young people will have received training in youth mental health
15. 100% of young people will be able to access quality-assured, safe and responsible online mental health supports and resources in their local community