

Revised submission

20th of April, 2005, revised on June 5th 2005

Committee Secretary,
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health

Re: Unmet need in Supported Accommodation, Employment, Family and Social Support Services as a barrier to better mental health outcomes

I am a 72 year old widow, providing housing and support for my 42 year old schizophrenic daughter. She has been discharged from public hospital care and its attendant Case Manager and Allied Health services into the private sector.

My overwhelming problem is, what will be her fate after I die? Where will she find a secure place to live with some support? There is nothing available now. But she needs it now, so as to learn to cope before the additional mental trauma of my death. As she is an unsophisticated female, will it be safe?

Would anything she might inherit on my death help, or prejudice her cause? (At present it would cut her out of the one shared housing scheme about which I have made enquiries.) Her situation is an invisible problem at the moment but within 10 years or so will be apparent and desperate.

The need for supported accommodation is urgent. Figures to hand suggest that only 4.9 % of mental health sufferers live in purpose run supported accommodation (National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing Bulletin 5, National Health Strategy 2002). This is patently inadequate for a country such as ours.

The need for supported part time employment and inclusion into other valuable social activities is also pressing. This would add purpose and meaning to life and assist outcomes, but first we have to physically support that life with secure supported accommodation.

Yours sincerely,

A concerned mother