



Mental Health Matters 2

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Post Implementation Review of the Mental Health Act 2014 (the Act). I would also like to thank Angela Rabbitt and Leah Richards from the Mental Health Commission who took the time to attend our evening Families 4 Families WA peer education and support group on 23rd May 2017 in order to hear directly from families and supporters of people who have been subject to the Act.

In addition to the feedback given by the people attending on the 23rd May, I would like to emphasise that regrettably, the experiences which families continue to share with us in relation to the 'new' Act are disappointing and demonstrate a significant lack of culture change. While some families have experienced an increase in notifications, it is their feedback that this seems to be carried out as part of compliance rather than as a concerted practice towards meaningfully working with families and significant others.

The feedback that we receive is that there continues to be significant lack of involvement of families and supporters in treatment and discharge planning. This is not specific to any one site but across the metro health districts.

What is particularly noteworthy is that those families and supporters who contributed wholeheartedly and in a spirit of collaboration and hopefulness towards the development of the Act continue to report that it's 'business as usual'. They now question the usefulness of their input and many have simply distanced themselves from participating in any further consultations.

Another key and consistent area of feedback is complaints resolution. Navigating the Department of Health processes is both confusing and complex and families report to us that they are increasingly unlikely to take the time to try to lodge complaints given that there is rarely a productive outcome when they have done so. They are precluded from going directly to HaDSCO who advise them that they must try to resolve the complaint with the service/agency first of all. This all takes time and energy usually at a time when these elements are required for support and care of their loved one who may still be very unwell, if not prematurely discharged. Knowing the limited resources of families in this area makes it particularly important that complaint resolution processes are simple, straightforward to navigate and have a useful and timely outcome.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Doherty', written over the typed name.

Margaret Doherty
Convenor
31st August 2017