

Response to Action Nine

Some of you who sent Action Nine (on the need for an inter-departmental working group to implement *A Vision for Change*) may have received responses from your local TDs or various Ministers stating that they were forwarding your concerns to the Minister for Health. Please find enclosed our response to this and a sample letter that can be sent to Ministers/TDs if you would like to take further action.

Dear Network members,

As you know, in Action 9 in June, we asked you to write to your TDs and to a number of government departments. From the feedback that we have received from you it is clear that, in response either to direct letters from you or to letters from your targeted TDs, the Ministers and Departments have simply been making referrals to the Department of Health and Children.

While the Department of Health and Children has primary responsibility for mental health, a number of other departments were identified in the recommendations in *A Vision for Change*. The Independent Monitoring Group, which was established by the Department of Health and Children to oversee implementation of *A Vision for Change*, has recommended that an interdepartmental working group be established, and that Government Departments should report through the interdepartmental group on a three monthly basis in relation to progress with the implementation of the recommendations for which they are responsible. It has also been reported that the proposed Office for Mental Health will coordinate the responsibilities of a number of different government departments.

It is crucial that all government departments of relevance to the recommendations in *A Vision for Change*, and identified for the remit of the new Office for Mental Health, take steps to address and implement their responsibilities for mental health in Ireland. This month we have included a letter addressing the question of the referrals from government departments to the Department of Health and Children. If you wish to take further action this month, you may send this letter to your TD asking him or her to raise the matter of interdepartmental responsibility with party colleagues, and government Ministers.