

[Sample letter to TD]

[Insert your own
address]

[Insert name] TD

Address

Address

Address

[Insert date]

Dear Deputy [insert name],

I am from your constituency and am writing to express my concern about mental health in Ireland. For too long, successive Irish governments have neglected mental health and related services. This is a human rights issue.

If the national mental health policy framework *A Vision for Change* were implemented in full, it could reverse decades of neglect. However, the first progress report published in May 2007 by the Independent Monitoring Group, established by the Department of Health and Children to oversee implementation, points to the many areas where implementation has been slow. Many actions reported to the Independent Monitoring Group by Departments outside the Department of Health and Children, were already in train before *A Vision for Change*. Other actions are part of their existing commitments to people with disabilities and do not make clear how people with mental health problems will benefit specifically.

The Independent Monitoring Group 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. Similarly recent reporting has identified the imminent establishment of a cross-departmental Office for Mental Health, which will address the responsibilities of other government departments, beyond the Department of Health and Children, under *A Vision for Change*. Minister of State with responsibility for Disability and Mental Health, Dr Jimmy Devins, has indicated that

the portfolio of the new office will include Education, Enterprise and Justice departments.

I would be grateful for an answer to the following question:

Given the recommendation for an interdepartmental working group, and the proposed establishment of an Office for Mental Health, what steps have the relevant Government Department taken to identify and fulfil their responsibilities?

I am calling on you to discuss this issue with your party colleagues and raise it with the Ministers for Health and Children; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Education and Science; and Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

It is critical that official neglect be ended now, and that a new political era begins where the rights of people with mental health difficulties are respected.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]