

[Sample letter to Min for Health]

**[Insert your own
address]**

Mary Harney TD
Minister for Health and Children
Hawkins House
Hawkins Street
Dublin 2

[Insert date]

Dear Minister,

On 24th January 2006, the new national policy framework for mental health, *A Vision for Change*, was published. I had hoped that this new policy, and its endorsement by the new Government in June 2007, would open up a political era where the basic human rights of people with mental health difficulties are finally fulfilled. However, on the second anniversary of this policy, little has changed on the ground for people with mental health problems.

A Vision for Change advises that a minimum of an additional 25m euro is required annually for its implementation. I note with dismay that there appears to be no additional funding allocated in Budget 2008 for this purpose. If this is the case, it is most unacceptable, and I wish to know why the Government has decided not to live up to its promise.

Furthermore, while allocations of the additional 25m were made in 2006 and 2007, there is no clear evidence that the full amount of these allocations has actually been spent on mental health services.

[Insert specific concerns in your own community, or use your experience as an example of your concern, related to the monthly question(s)]

While operational responsibility for mental health services may lie with the Health Service Executive, political accountability rests with your Department. Hence, I would be grateful for an answer to the following questions:

1. Of the allocations of 25m additional investment in 2006 and 2007, how much of this money has actually been spent on mental health services to date, and on what specific outcomes?

2. If portions of the allocations of 25m additional investment in 2006 and 2007 remain unspent, why, and what is now planned for these remainders?

3. Is it the case that no additional funding has been allocated in budget 2008 for the implementation of 'A Vision for Change', and if so, why?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]