

[Sample letter to Minister for Finance]

**[Insert your own
address]**

Brian Cowen
Department of Finance,
Government Buildings,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2,
Ireland.

Dear Mr Cowen,

I am writing to express my concern about mental health in Ireland.

One in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives. Yet, mental health promotion and prevention in Ireland are given little attention. Mental health services are inadequate, uneven in their availability throughout the country, and under-resourced in staff and therapies. Mental health services and supports for children and other vulnerable groups are particularly poor.

The neglect of mental health to date is something that gravely concerns me. It is a human rights issue.

[Insert specific concerns in your own community related to the monthly question(s)]

In January 2006, the Irish Government committed itself to a new national policy framework for mental health, *A Vision for Change*. It sets out a broad agenda for promoting mental health, preventing mental health problems, providing adequate mental health services, and addressing the practical day-to-day difficulties and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems. *A Vision for Change* sets out how much Government needs to spend in developing mental health services. But there is far more in *A Vision for Change* that will need Government investment.

For instance, it says that personal advocacy services are essential to empowering people with mental health problems, but are only available on a very limited basis. *A Vision for Change* says that they need to be expanded and that this will require money.

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

Will budget 2007 include provision for increased resources across all areas identified in *A Vision for Change* aside from mental health services?

As Minister for Finance I am calling on you to address this issue.

I am calling on you to discuss this issue with your party colleagues and raise it with the Minister for Health and Children.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]