

[Script for phone calls to TDs]

It is best to ring the TDs' offices in Leinster House. See contact details below. It is simply a matter of ringing the number and asking for your relevant elected official. If you prefer to contact your TD at the local advice clinic you can do that too. *This script is only meant to be a guide for your conversation.*

Leinster House Address

You can send letters to all TDs to Dáil Éireann, Leinster House, Dublin 2.

Leinster House Main Switch Board

Dáil Éireann LoCall: 1890 337 889

(outside of Dublin only)

from within Dublin: (01) 618-3000

Oireachtas Website: www.irlgov.ie

"Hello, my name is *insert your name*, may I speak with Deputy *insert elected official's name*?, (Whether you are speaking to a secretary or the elected official, the following script will work)

World Mental Health Day, I am calling regarding implementation of the 2006 national mental health policy framework, *A Vision for Change*. The global theme of this year's Mental Health Day is making mental health a global priority by scaling up services through citizen advocacy and action.

While I welcome *A Vision for Change*, I am concerned that in Ireland and elsewhere-mental health is not given the political priority it deserves. Despite significant efforts, Irish mental health promotion, prevention and services remain out of step with international best practice and, as such, fail to fully comply with international human rights law.

Ireland is a signatory to the human rights treaty, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). Article 12 of this treaty states that *every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health*. The highest attainable standard of mental health means that that, for any person in Ireland

- They will receive appropriate mental health services when they need and want them, and those services will be designed towards people's empowerment and recovery.
- When they are using services they will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Government policy will be conducive to good mental health, and not negatively impact on anyone's capacity to enjoy good mental health.

As you are aware, Ireland will be reporting to the United Nations Committee on ESCR's in 2009 on its implementation of this treaty and must account for its action on mental health.

This human right is not confined to the right to all to mental health services, Government also has a duty to promote conditions in which people can lead a mentally healthy life, addressing the underlying determinants of mental health, such as access to work, education or appropriate housing. It must also create an environment where stigma and discrimination against those experiencing mental ill-health is minimised.

I am very concerned at not just the slow pace of expansion and change within mental health services, but also, from the two annual reports of the Independent Monitoring Group of *A Vision for Change*, little or no engagement by Departments outside Health. A new report from the Mental Health Commission on the economic benefits of investment in mental health services shows that the main economic costs of mental health problems are located in the labour market as a result of lost employment, absenteeism, lost productivity and premature retirement. In light of the economic downturn, it makes more sense than ever to ensure that all Government Departments are 'pulling their weight' in preventing mental health difficulties and supporting people towards recovery.

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

Will an interdepartmental working group be established to drive and coordinate action by all Government Departments whose role *A Vision for Change* mentions?