

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wish to raise with you the issue of mental health and human rights and emphasise its importance in the forthcoming local elections.

The right to the highest attainable standard of mental health is a fundamental human right. Sadly this right is far from a reality for the majority of people seeking mental health and support services today and while the June elections will be dominated by economic concerns we must not forget that, according to the Mental Health Commission, the annual cost of poor mental health in Ireland is a staggering €3 billion, or 2% of GNP.

The practical problems of day-to-day living can be extremely challenging for people experiencing mental or emotional distress and is tightly wed to social exclusion and discrimination. Within its remit Local Government must fulfil its duties to people experiencing mental health difficulties both by prioritising their access to the services it provides and also by advocating for their rights in a way that feeds into the national political debate.

As a Candidate in the forthcoming local elections I am calling on you to commit to the following:

1. Pass a motion following the election of the new Council calling on the Government to implement its mental health policy, *A Vision for Change*.
2. Actively promote mental health and include those with experience of mental health difficulties in all local consultations and community development projects.
3. Ensure that mental health equality training is provided for local authority personnel, particularly those involved in strategic planning, social inclusion, access and service provision.
4. Map local service need and delivery of employment schemes for people with experience of mental health difficulties.
5. Introduce a protocol between the local authority and the HSE to ensure the housing rights of individuals with experience of mental health difficulties are met.

I urge you to give this letter your fullest attention and to commit to acting on its contents should you be successful in the upcoming election,

Yours Sincerely,