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Ms Bernadette Lacey  
Secretary General of Department of Social and Family Affairs  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada  
Store Street, Dublin 1

\_\_\_ May 2009

Dear Ms Lacey,

I am writing to you on behalf of Amnesty International to raise with you the matter of provisions for people who have experience of mental health difficulties as set out in your Department's Sectoral Plan under the National Disability Strategy.

The right to the highest attainable standard of mental health is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which Ireland has ratified. This right in turn rests on the fulfillment of the full range of economic, social and cultural rights that every person should enjoy. In many cases responsibility for ensuring these rights are fulfilled rest squarely with your Department.

I want the Sectoral Plan to show specifically how your department will provide services and supports to people with mental health problems and how it will implement the recommendations that apply to it as set out in *A Vision for Change*. In particular, with regard to your Department's Sectoral Plan I would like to ask how your department:

- will fulfill the recommendations relevant to that Department set out in *A Vision for Change*, specifying how their services will be tailored to meet the needs of people with mental health problems
- will implement the recommendations of the National Economic and Social Forum report: *Mental Health & Social Inclusion*
- will train frontline staff in providing good quality service to people with mental health difficulties
- will report on progress specifically in relation to people with mental health difficulties when reporting overall progress on the Sectoral Plan
- will provide a coordinated service, in conjunction with other departments, for each individual person with a mental health difficulty who needs assistance from welfare, housing, FÁS and/or the HSE.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these issues. I would appreciate a reply from your office.

Kind regards,