

## **[Sample letter to Minister for Health and Children]**

**[Insert your own  
address]**

**Mary Harney  
Minister for Health and Children  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

Dear Ms Harney,

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

In January 2006, the Irish Government committed itself to a new national policy framework for mental health, *A Vision for Change*. This mental health policy sets out a vision for the future proposed by an Expert Group on Mental Health Policy. But it must be followed now by Government setting out in an implementation plan what it will actually do to make this vision a reality. I am concerned that 11 months later, there is no information in the public domain about how Government proposes to implement its recommendations.

Almost every family and person in the country is affected in some way by the slow pace of progress in mental health to date by successive governments.

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

On 4th December, RTÉ broadcast a Primetime investigation into children's mental health. It showed that government failed to implement recommendations from two expert group reports on children's mental health services published in 2001 and 2003. It showed the terrible human cost of this failure. Other Government reports and policies on mental health have also remained largely unimplemented. Therefore, I am deeply concerned that *A Vision for Change* will not be implemented fully either. January 2007 will be the first anniversary of this policy, and the Irish public needs to see a detailed implementation plan published by Government, backed by increased resources.

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

What has Government done in the last 11 months to begin implementing *A Vision for Change*?

When will an implementation plan be published by Government, i.e. setting out what it will do across all areas identified in *A Vision for Change*, and when?

I am calling on you to discuss this issue with your party colleagues and other Government Departments whose roles are mentioned in *A Vision for Change*.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**[Insert your name]**