

[Sample letter to Minister of State]

**[Insert your own
address]**

Minister Brian Lenihan
Department of Health and Children,
Hawkins House,
Dublin 2

[Insert date]

Dear Mr Lenihan,

I am from your constituency and 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 speedy implementation by Government.

Children can wait years to access mental health services. Children's mental health services outlined in *A Vision for Change* should be developed as a matter of urgency. Approximately 300 children per year are placed in adult inpatient facilities. The highest priority should be given to ending the practice of placing children in inpatient facilities with adults in violation of children's rights, through the provision of sufficient inpatient facilities appropriate to the needs of children.

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

January 24th marks the one-year anniversary of *A Vision for Change*. By its second anniversary, how far will waiting times be reduced and how many children's inpatient facilities will be available?

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

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]