

Dear

I am from the constituency in which you are standing for election and I am writing to express my concern about mental health in Ireland.

One in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives. Yet, mental health promotion and prevention in Ireland are given little attention. Mental health services are inadequate, uneven in their availability throughout the country, and under-resourced in staff and therapies. Mental health services and supports for children and other vulnerable groups are particularly poor.

The neglect of mental health to date is something that gravely concerns me. It is a human rights issue.

In January 2006, the Irish Government committed itself to a new national policy framework for mental health, *A Vision for Change*. It sets out a broad agenda for promoting mental health, preventing mental health problems, providing adequate mental health services, and addressing the practical day-to-day difficulties and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems.

Despite the fact that the government has set up an expert implementation group there is as of yet no detailed implementation plan or timeframe for this.

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

- Will your party commit to producing a detailed implementation plan at the earliest opportunity, setting out the major activities to implement *A Vision for Change*, with explicit performance targets and indicators, timelines, service user involvement and concrete resource commitments?

- Will your party ensure the adoption of an interdepartmental approach between all Government Departments and agencies whose role and function it is to deliver upon any of the recommendations, or address any of the issues, raised in *A Vision for Change*?
- Do you commit to ensure that the programme of capital and non-capital investment in mental health services laid out in *A Vision for Change* relating to expanding public mental health services will be achieved?
- Will your party, if part of the new Government, review legislation and identify what further and better provision could be made in law to meet the goals set out in *A Vision for Change*, and to protect the rights and improve the lives of people with mental health problems?
- Will you ensure that the roles, responsibilities and resourcing of voluntary organisations, service user organisations and service users will be built firmly into the implementation of *A Vision for Change*, and profiled within assessments of its implementation?

I am calling on you to discuss this issue with your party colleagues and make a commitment that, if members of the next Irish Government, they shall ensure that the national policy framework for mental health, *A Vision for Change*, will be implemented in full.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,