

[Sample letter to TDs]

**[Insert your own
address]**

[Insert name] TD

Address

Address

Address

[Insert date]

Dear Deputy **[insert name]**,

I am from your constituency and I am writing to express my concern about mental health in Ireland. For too long, successive Irish governments have neglected mental health and related services. This is a human rights issue.

The new Irish Government and 30th Dáil may span five years of the seven-year lifetime of the 2006 national mental health policy framework, *A Vision for Change*. In delivering its Programme for Government, the new Government must, at last, give mental health the priority it deserves. I am asking you to make mental health a priority.

[Insert specific concerns in your own community related to the monthly question(s)]

If *A Vision for Change* were implemented in full, it could reverse the decades of neglect. However, the first progress report published in May 2007 by the Independent Monitoring Group, established by the Department of Health and Children to oversee implementation, points to the many areas where implementation has been slow. Many actions reported to the Independent Monitoring Group by Departments outside the Department of Health and Children, were already in train before *A Vision for Change*. Other actions are part of their existing commitments to people with disabilities and do not make clear how people with mental health problems will benefit specifically.

The Independent Monitoring Group has recommended that an interdepartmental working group be established, and that

Government Departments should report through the interdepartmental group on a three monthly basis in relation to progress with the implementation of the recommendations for which they are responsible.

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

Will an interdepartmental working group be established to drive and coordinate action by all Government Departments whose role *A Vision for Change* mentions?

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

It is critical that official neglect be ended now, and that a new political era begins where the rights of people with mental health difficulties are respected.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]