

Ms Mary Harney, T.D.,  
Minister for Health and Children  
Department of Health and Children  
Hawkins House  
Hawkins Street  
Dublin 2

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Minister for Health and Children to ask you to ensure that mental health services do not face any more cuts in the up coming budget. Mental health services have been disproportionately cut in the current economic downturn. Current spending on mental health services has been reduced to just 5.3 per cent of the HSE budget. In real terms, spending has been reduced by 9.2 per cent between 2006 and 2009. This cannot be allowed to continue.

I am asking you to protect mental health services and ensure that the HSE develops mental health services in line with Government policy. More specifically to ensure that:

- The HSE's 2011 National Service Plan details and quantifies planned mental health service provision and development under *A Vision for Change* for next year;
- The HSE begins implementing a national accounting system in 2011 that will enable it to account for expenditure by care group; and
- The Government amends existing health and mental health legislation in order to underpin the provision of comprehensive and community-based mental health services, and ensure transparent planning and reporting on the funding and delivery of mental health services by the HSE.

At a time when the suicide rate is dramatically increasing, there is an urgent need to ensure adequate mental health services. We simply cannot afford to do otherwise.

I look forward to a response to your office.

Yours sincerely,