



Mental Health Reform

Promoting Improved Mental Health Services

An Taoiseach,
Mr Simon Harris, TD
Government Buildings
Merrion St Upper
Dublin 2

24th September 2024

Dear Taoiseach,

As members and allies of Mental Health Reform, we call on the Irish Government to prioritise funding for our mental health services in the upcoming budget.

After you became Taoiseach, you said that you “know what it feels like when you feel your voice is not being heard.” For years, Mental Health Reform, and our members have called for appropriate funding for mental health services in Ireland. Despite repeated calls for investment, only 5.6% of the total health budget is allocated to mental health. This is significantly below the 10% recommended in Sláintecare. We, too, feel our voices are not being heard.

Persistent underfunding is having a long-term impact on the mental health system. Ireland ranks highest in Europe for difficulty accessing mental health services. There are long delays for treatment, inconsistent standards of care, and severe staffing shortages. Children and families in particular are unable to access appropriate or timely intervention. Delivery of gender-sensitive mental health services as set-out in Sharing the Vision is also crucial. There has been a recurrent lack of sufficient new development funding for the HSE’s national clinical programmes in mental health. This has limited the availability of life-saving treatment for people with eating disorders, psychosis, dual diagnosis and other complex needs.

Currently, only 1% of health expenditure is allocated to preventative measures. However, any investment in prevention can yield two to four times the economic return. The voluntary and community sector is committed to improving mental health outcomes through prevention and early intervention. Investment in these services is key to preventing the development of complex mental health difficulties and reducing the need for costly acute care. The sector is ideally situated to assist in the expansion of mental health services in the community, ensuring access to support at the earliest point possible.

In our pre-budget submission, Mental Health Reform recommends an investment of an additional €120M for mental health in Budget 2025. This includes an additional €25M for voluntary and community providers and an additional €10M to resource youth mental health services to support children and young people.

As the Programme for Government draws to a close, you have a unique opportunity to leave a positive legacy. The mental health of our nation is at stake. Let’s build a mental health system we can be proud of—one that listens, acts, and delivers.

The time is now, Taoiseach. Those in need of mental health services and supports can no longer wait.

Yours sincerely,

1. Fiona Coyle, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Reform
2. Philip Watt, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Reform
3. Lise Alford, Manager, 3Ts
4. Ken Kilbride, Chief Executive Officer, ADHD Ireland
5. Dr. Sheila Gilheany, Chief Executive Officer, Alcohol Action Ireland
6. Seán Moynihan, Chief Executive Officer, ALONE
7. Andy Heffernan, Chief Executive Officer, Alzheimer Society of Ireland
8. Odhrán Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland
9. Suzanne Connolly, Chief Executive Officer, Barnardos Ireland
10. Moninne Griffith, Chief Executive Officer, Belong To
11. Joseph P. Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Bloomfield Health Services
12. Jacinta Hastings, Chief Executive Officer, Bodywhys
13. Michele Kerrigan, Chief Executive Officer, Care After Prison
14. Diarmaid Ó Corrbuí, Chief Executive Officer, Carmichael
15. Sarah Jane Hennelly, Chief Executive Officer, Community Therapy Ireland
16. Hugh Morley, Head of Business, Cork Counselling Services
17. Dr. Tracey Monson, Chief Executive Officer, Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
18. David Carroll, Chief Executive Officer, Depaul Ireland
19. Elaine Teague, Chief Executive Officer, Disability Federation of Ireland
20. Carol Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Dual Diagnosis Ireland
21. Sharon Lane, Chief Executive Officer, Dyspraxia DCD Ireland
22. Helen Ryan, Chairperson, European Association of Professional Hypnotherapists
23. John O'Brien, National Traveller Mental Health Service Manager, Exchange House
24. Hannah Ní Ghiolla Mhairtín, Founder, Families for Reform of CAMHS
25. Pat Dennigan, Chief Executive Officer, Focus Ireland
26. Ray Cullen, Chief Executive Officer, Futures in Mind
27. Annabel O'Keefe, Chief Executive Officer, GROW Mental Health
28. Laura Condon, Executive Director, Helplink Mental Health
29. Fiona Tuomey, Chief Executive Officer, HUGG
30. Lisa Molloy, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy
31. Andrea Plunkett, Chair, Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists
32. Danielle McGoldrick, Office Manager, Irish Association of Social Workers
33. Áine Lawlor, Chairperson, Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists
34. Liam Herrick, Executive Director, Irish Council for Civil Liberties
35. Rúaighrís O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Council for Psychotherapy
36. Róisín Clarke, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Foster Care Association
37. Maisie Jones, Network and Communications Programme Lead, Irish Global Health Network
38. Mary McHugh, Founder, Irish Online Counselling & Psychotherapy Service
39. Saoirse Brady, Executive Director, Irish Penal Reform Trust
40. John Church, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
41. Dr. Marie Ó Mír, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists
42. Joseph Duffy, Chief Executive Officer, Jigsaw
43. Berni Smyth, Chief Executive Officer, Kerry Diocesan Youth Service
44. Eoin Galavan, Clinical Director, Kyrie Farm
45. Lisa Cuthbert, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Ireland
46. Grace Kearney, Head of Health and Wellbeing, National Forum of Family Resource Centres
47. Dr. Eve Griffin, Chief Executive Officer, National Suicide Research Foundation

48. Orla O'Connor, Director, National Women's Council
49. Mikayla Morton, National Coordinator, Niteline
50. Patrick Reilly, Coordinator Mental Health Initiative, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
51. Colette Nolan, Chief Executive Officer, Peer Advocacy in Mental Health
52. Stephanie Manahan, Chief Executive Officer, Pieta
53. Fran Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, Polio Survivors Ireland
54. Dr. Odhrán McCarthy, President, Psychological Society of Ireland
55. Nicola Byrne, Chief Executive Officer, Shine
56. Jess Angland, Chief Operations Officer, Slí Eile
57. Ian Power, Chief Executive Officer, spunout
58. Paul Gilligan, Chief Executive Officer, St. Patrick's University Hospital
59. Joan Wall, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Suicide or Survive
60. Adrienne Kilkenny, Chief Executive Officer, Threshold Training Network
61. Chris Clifford, President, Union of Students in Ireland
62. Kevin Kelly, Head of Policy and External Affairs, Vision Ireland
63. Siobhán O'Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer, Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland