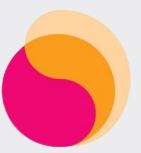


# TALK TO YOUR TD



## LET'S GET MENTAL HEALTH ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA!



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
MATTERS



### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

Talking about mental health is vital to getting mental health on the political agenda. COVID-19 has put mental health at the centre of conversations about our wellbeing but there are still vast improvements needed. Waiting lists are unacceptably long, the percentage of the national health budget spent on mental health is far too low and stigma leads mental health to sometimes be low on the priority list.

- Your voice matters
  - Telling your story and speaking about lived experiences is very powerful
- You can create change
  - Elected representatives will often prioritise the issues that are most important to you, their constituents; these issues are often raised to representatives by constituents at the doors during canvassing or directly via email, phone or post
- Mental health as a voting issue
  - Elected representatives need to know that mental health is a voting issue for you
  - In order to create change we have to let elected representatives know what changes we need
- Get mental health on the political agenda
  - Contacting your elected representative could help get issues like mental health on the political agenda

### HOW ARE OUR PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED?

- The people of Ireland directly elect the members of Dáil Éireann (who are called Deputies or TDs). You can find out who your local TD is on [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie), or on [www.whoismytd.com](http://www.whoismytd.com)
- TDs may be a member of a political party, or be an independent representative
- Public representatives also include;
  - Local Councillors - found on local authority website or by calling your local authority, i.e. city council, county council etc.
  - Senators – found on Oireachtas website
  - Members of European Parliament or 'MEPs' - found on [www.europarl.europa.eu/ireland/en/your-meps](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ireland/en/your-meps)
- Ireland is divided into areas known as constituencies. You can find the current constituency maps on [www.gov.ie/en/publication/3d721-constituency-maps-current/](http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3d721-constituency-maps-current/)
- You need to be on the Live Register in order to vote. To check if you are registered go to [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie). You can find information on voting on [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)



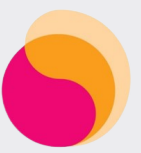
### HOW TO MAKE CONTACT

There are a number of ways you can reach out to elected representatives. When you make contact, tell your elected representative that you are a constituent of theirs and provide them with details of how you can be contacted.

- Email - All individual representative's emails are available on the Oireachtas website
- Phone call – You can call directly. Numbers are available on the Oireachtas website
- Meet in person - You can ask to meet your local TD or ask for their clinic times. These are usually on their website and/or social media accounts
- Letter - You can find the postal address on the Oireachtas website
- Social media - Many elected representatives have social media accounts
- Attending events - sometimes elected representatives will be at events and you can speak with them directly there



# TALK TO YOUR TD



## LET'S GET MENTAL HEALTH ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA!

### UNCRPD

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is a document that sets out a series of rights and principles
- Governments (States) must take steps to ensure that people can access and exercise the rights listed in the Convention
- The aim of the UNCRPD is to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities so that they enjoy full equality under the law
- It is up to each individual what language they use to describe their mental health experiences. People who have long-term mental health difficulties have rights under the UNCRPD and the term used by the United Nations to describe people living with such mental health difficulties is "psychosocial disabilities"
- Mental Health Reform has a short guide, an easy to read guide and a video on our website about the UNCRPD. You can find it on [www.mentalhealthreform.ie](http://www.mentalhealthreform.ie) at Home/Campaigns/UNCRPD

### KEEP INFORMED

**Newsletter** - If you would like to keep up to date with our work, please subscribe to our newsletter on our website, [www.mentalhealthreform.ie](http://www.mentalhealthreform.ie)

**Social Media** - We are on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook

### MENTAL HEALTH TOPICS -

### #RESOURCEBUILDREFORM

- **Resource** - Did you know that Ireland only spends between 5-6% of our health budget on mental health, despite Sláintecare recommending 10% and other European States spending between 10-15%?
- **Rebuild** - We need thorough governance, strategic oversight and workforce planning to build mental health services that meet the mental health needs of the people in Ireland
- **Reform** - We need legislation that protects mental health and human rights. Now is a pivotal time to drive change forward as we are in the process of reforming the Mental Health Act 2001

### USEFUL LINKS

Mental Health Reform Website - [www.mentalhealthreform.ie](http://www.mentalhealthreform.ie)

SpunOut Article - [www.spunout.ie/voices/advice/how-to-get-in-contact-with-your-td](http://www.spunout.ie/voices/advice/how-to-get-in-contact-with-your-td)

Oireachtas Contact Details - [www.oireachtas.ie/en/contact-us](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/contact-us)

Find your TD - [www.whoismytd.com](http://www.whoismytd.com)

Easy to Read Guide - The Oireachtas Website has a document called 'A Brief Guide to How Your Parliament Works'

Uplift - Uplift is a community of people who collectively campaign for change in Ireland. Their website is [www.uplift.ie](http://www.uplift.ie)

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