

An Taoiseach,  
Mr Micheál Martin, TD  
Government Buildings  
Merrion St Upper  
Dublin 2

30th September 2025

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.

At Mental Health Reform, together with our members, we believe that everyone should have timely and equal access to mental health services, available where and when they are needed, regardless of background or location. Ireland continues to face significant challenges. Recent research shows that Ireland scored lowest out of nine European countries on mental wellbeing, with almost half of people reporting that they are “languishing” or “struggling.” More than 4 in 10 adults are living with mental health difficulties, one of the highest rates in Europe, with young people hit hardest. Ireland is also ranked among the most difficult countries in Europe to access mental health services, leaving too many people waiting far too long for care. UNICEF has highlighted poor child and youth outcomes, including youth suicide rates above the international average. Despite people’s best efforts to look after their wellbeing, the reality is clear: our system is not keeping up, and public investment still falls far short of what is needed.

While reforms are underway, including new Health Regions, reform of the Mental Health Act 2001, and the 2025–2027 Implementation Plan for Sharing the Vision, these changes will only deliver lasting impact if underpinned by transparent, targeted, and sustained investment.

Currently, just 5.6% of the health budget is allocated to mental health, well below the 10% target in *Sláintecare*. Longstanding underinvestment has left a lasting impact: long waits for treatment, staffing shortages, and inconsistent care. Children and young people are waiting too long for support, while marginalised groups such as Travellers, migrants, LGBTQI+ communities, and those with dual diagnoses continue to face barriers to care.

The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in filling these gaps. Across the country, organisations provide trusted and accessible supports that prevent challenges from escalating through early intervention. With sustained investment, these services can expand capacity, reach people earlier, and ease pressure on acute care. Multi-annual funding is essential to plan ahead, retain skilled staff, and deliver consistent, high-quality support.

To begin to reverse this trend, Mental Health Reform and our 80+ members are calling for an additional **€200 million investment in Budget 2026**, comprising €80m to sustain existing services and €120m in development funding. This includes €40m for Sharing the Vision, €25m for access measures, €25m for community services, €20m for children and young people, and €10m to resource legislative change. This is a prudent and realistic step towards achieving 10% of the health budget for mental health by 2030.

As Taoiseach, you have an opportunity to leave a legacy of meaningful progress. By prioritising mental health in Budget 2026, you can help build a system that is preventative, inclusive, and rights-based, one that listens, acts, and delivers.

The time is now. People in need of mental health services and supports cannot wait any longer.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Judith Malone

## Mental Health Reform

Chairperson



# Mental Health Reform

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