

**INVEST AT LEAST AN ADDITIONAL €80M  
IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN 2021**

**€80M**

The impact of COVID-19 has had a significant effect on people's mental health and has emphasised the serious gaps that exist across our mental health system. Thousands more people are now coming forward to access supports during this difficult time. But our mental health system was already under serious pressure before this pandemic, meaning services are now stretched further than ever.

**The United Nations (UN) has warned that COVID-19 risks sparking a major global mental health crisis and has reported higher-than-usual levels of symptoms of depression and anxiety across various countries.**



This year is also particularly significant for mental health because the Government has published a new national mental health policy, *Sharing the Vision*. The sets out an ambitious policy for the future of our mental health system. If the Government are serious about the success of this policy, significant investment is needed to provide the best possible start. This investment must recognise that *Sharing the Vision* comes at a time when mental health services are already far behind where they should be.

Mental Health Reform along with our 75 member organisations call on the Government to invest additional funding of €80M in our mental health services in Budget 2021. This includes €30M to maintain existing levels of services (ELS) and €50M to be used exclusively for developing our services to deal with the new challenges faced. Of the 50M development funding, €10M is needed to commence the short-term recommendations of the Government's new national mental health policy, *Sharing the Vision*.

**Government must invest additional funding in the following areas:**

**ACT NOW!**



Increase staffing levels across mental health services



Develop out-of-hours crisis mental health services to give people quick and easy access to the support they need



Invest in primary care mental health and talk therapies to prevent and intervene early in mental health difficulties



Support people to navigate the system and vindicate their rights by hiring mental health advocates



Support the C&V sector to continue providing essential mental health services



Invest in the Individual Placement and Support approach to help people with mental health difficulties get back to work



Ensure people with mental health difficulties can access and maintain affordable housing



Substantially improve mental health services in the prison system

## WHY INVEST IN MENTAL HEALTH?



**THE NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET HAS REMAINED AT APPROX 6% OF THE OVERALL HEALTH BUDGET FOR MANY YEARS.**



*A Vision For Change* recommended 8% by 2016. Sláintecare recommends 10%. The UK spend nearly 13% of their health budget on Mental Health.

**ALMOST 2,000 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ON WAITING LISTS**

for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



**THE MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET IS ONLY NOW APPROACHING PRE-RECESSION LEVELS**

despite significant increases in demand, including a 40% increase in referrals to CAMHS between 2011 and 2019. In 2009 the mental health budget was €1.02bn. In 2020, it was €1.03B. Following the recession, it fell as low as €708M in 2011.



**THERE ARE FEWER STAFF WORKING IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TODAY THAN THERE WERE IN 2008.**



These shortages in staffing levels can result in long waiting lists to access services, the absence of particular therapies/supports, and adverse effects on quality of service and continuity of care.

**IN JANUARY 2020, THERE WERE 10,642 INDIVIDUALS ON A WAITING LIST FOR A PRIMARY CARE PSYCHOLOGY APPOINTMENT,**



of which 33% (or 3,572) were waiting more than a year to be seen.

**JUST 78% OF THE MENTAL HEALTH STAFF REQUIRED ARE IN POST, IN LINE WITH A VISION FOR CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS.**

The HSE has estimated that an additional €177M is required simply to achieve these staffing requirements. This figure does not include staffing mental health professionals required within the primary care, community and voluntary sectors.



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