

Minister Mary Butler, TD
Chief Whip and Minister for Mental Health
Department of Health
Block 1, Miesian Plaza,
50 – 58 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2, D02 XW14

5th June 2025

Dear Minister Butler,

As you are aware, Shine is Ireland's national organisation supporting individuals and families affected by mental illness and stigma. In 2024, Shine saw substantial increases in service uptake, stigma-reduction engagement and activity, and requests for family advocacy. This is clear evidence of both public need and our growing impact. Our [annual report](#) was recently published. It shows the increased level of demand which is now at an unsustainable level.

Shine's ability to meet this demand equitably and sustainably is now critically constrained by static funding. This submission outlines a package of essential investments for Budget 2026 that directly support national mental health policy objectives as outlined in Sharing the Vision, Connecting for Life, Sláintecare, and Healthy Ireland.

We are seeking targeted, multi-annual investment in the following areas:

- Recovery service equity across all regions
- Information and Support Service capacity
- Stigma reduction (Green Ribbon campaign)
- Workplace mental health training
- Lived experience and family advocacy
- Expansion of Shine's national media programme

Shine's Strategic Relevance to National Policy

Shine's work actively supports the following goals:

- Sharing the Vision: Actions 5, 7, 29, 99 (community recovery, anti-stigma, lived experience involvement) and on outcomes 1 (a) (c)(d), 2 (a)(b)(c)(d), 3 (a)(b), 4 (a)(c)
- Connecting for Life: Goals 1, 3, and 4 (mental health literacy, stigma reduction, media reform)

Registered Charity Number: 20011512 CHY 6380

- Sláintecare: Enhanced access to community-based, person-centred mental health supports
- Healthy Ireland: Improved mental health outcomes and population wellbeing

In 2024, Shine delivered many services free of charge, including:

- Provided over 1,200 sessions of individual 1:1 recovery support
- Hosted 715 peer group sessions and 255 community events
- Distributed 650,000 Green Ribbons through 400+ partners
- Engaged in 50+ national consultations and campaigns via our lived experience Voice Platform
- Monitored 3,215 media items and trained 30+ journalists
- Managed high call volumes via our national information and support service

Budget 2026: Detailed Investment Priorities

1. Expand Regional Recovery Services – €450,000

We currently have significant coverage gaps in CHO1, CHO6, and CHO7, and are minimally staffed in CHO3, CHO5, and CHO8. We are seeking funding to recruit additional Mental Health Recovery Support Workers (MHRSWs) to provide equitable access nationally.

The cost of a MHRSW to include both pay and unpaid costs is estimated at €50,000 and running our peer facilitated group for either people with lived experience or family members/supporters cost an average of €10,000 per year to run. We have had no new funding to expand these services for many years and demand has increased in the last year by 42%.

2. Strengthen Mental Health Support Brief Information and Support Phonenumber – €100,000

To respond to rising call volumes, we need to place two staff members on the phonenumber during peak hours in 2026. This will ensure consistent, responsive national coverage and reduced wait times.

3. Scale Up Green Ribbon and National Stigma Reduction Campaigns – €100,000

The Green Ribbon campaign is Ireland's largest stigma-reduction initiative, yet demand has outgrown our capacity. We require investment in merchandise, outreach, a full marketing budget, and an additional WTE post to lead year-round campaign development and partnerships.

4. Sustain and Expand Workplace Mental Health Programme – €100,000

Currently funded at just 0.6 WTE, Shine's workplace programme cannot scale or specialise despite high demand. We seek funding for 1 full-time and 1 part-time post to support targeted outreach to sectors identified as high-risk by our recovery teams (e.g. healthcare, education, logistics).

Registered Charity Number: 20011512 CHY 6380

5. Fund Family Advocacy and Lived Experience Leadership – €60,000

Shine is not currently funded for advocacy, despite advocating daily for people and families navigating complex systems. We seek funding for 1 WTE Advocacy Officer to ensure families are heard, informed, and empowered. This also strengthens our work with our Voice Platform to ensure lived experience shapes national policy.

6. Expand Shine's National Media Programme – €110,000

We seek investment to extend Shine's work beyond journalism into fictional and screen media, where damaging representations of mental illness, especially psychosis, remain widespread. Two additional WTE staff would enable Shine to collaborate with screenwriters, film schools, and production companies, while monitoring mental health portrayals across film, drama, and streaming platforms.

Without investment, the system will continue to fail those most at risk, not due to a lack of innovation or will, but due to capacity constraints. The current model leaves recovery and support access dependent on geography, funding cycles, or charitable donations.

These asks are modest relative to their national benefit and targeted directly at existing policy gaps around access, stigma, inclusion, and public literacy.

Minister, we are proud to be part of delivering the Government's vision for a recovery-focused, rights-based, inclusive mental health system. We now ask for your support to match ambition with resources, so that no one affected by mental illness or stigma is left without access, voice, or support.

We would welcome a meeting with you or your officials to discuss these proposals in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Nicola Byrne
Chief Executive Officer