



inspire

wellbeing, ability, recovery

INSPIRE 20FOUR

A manifesto for the 2024 general election

WHO WE ARE

Inspire is an all-island charity and social enterprise and our aim is wellbeing for all.

We work alongside people living with mental ill health, intellectual disability, autism and addictions. We ensure that they live with dignity and realise their full potential.

Inspire campaigns to create a society free from stigma and a culture of compassion that focuses on individuals and their abilities.

Our Vision

Wellbeing for all

Our Values

We are Inclusive

We are Passionate

We are Determined

We are Kind

We are Honest

We are Innovative



INTRODUCTION

The 2024 general election represents an extremely important inflection point. It will determine the direction that the UK Government follows for the next five years and the way our society functions is going to be profoundly impacted by the outcome.

Mental health and wellbeing remain highly topical public health issues, grabbing the attention of voters and elected representatives alike. Since the last general election, everyone – everywhere – has endured an era-defining pandemic, a once-in-a-century event that caused untold physical and mental trauma.

In Northern Ireland, the lasting psychological impact of the Troubles and the ongoing harm caused by religious, political and racial divisions in our world are contributing to negative health outcomes for the most vulnerable.

This is why the work of the new parliament is so important. Westminster can, and must, use its powers to legislate and lead, improving lives in every part of the United Kingdom.

This document, Inspire 20Four, is our manifesto for the upcoming election. It lays out four high-level and varied priorities that we believe lawmakers should address for the benefit of all communities.

As an organisation, Inspire continues to engage with Northern Ireland Executive departments on a range of issues. The focus of this document, however, is different. Emerging from the conversations we have had with the many people who use our services, as well as the talented colleagues working beside them, the themes here fall within the purview of the UK Government.

Our service users understand the links between holistic policy making and positive wellbeing for all. They are as passionate about international issues as they are local concerns.

This is what they want from the UK Government.



PRIORITY 1

Funding Northern Ireland: a needs-based block grant

From the perspective of mental health, a renewed fiscal framework is essential. The Northern Ireland Executive commits far less to mental health services than anywhere else in the United Kingdom, in spite of the region's high suicide rates, the legacy of the Troubles, inter-generational trauma, profound economic inequalities and the social and health impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UK Government must start funding Northern Ireland according to need and the block grant should be calculated according to the real and various issues faced by people here.

The current per-head calculation is simply not fit for purpose. A newly realised fiscal framework should be designed to have an immediate impact and represent a floor, not a ceiling. Improved and more predictable resourcing will allow Executive departments to plan more easily and deliver the services upon which everyone relies. A needs-based model is key to building public services that excel, meet demand and support communities.

PRIORITY 2

Benefits and social security policy: a social security system that works for all

The social security system is one of our greatest public service investments. However, changes made to that system, enacted by the UK Government in recent years, have created genuine fear and anxiety. Given that it is contributing to rising poverty and negative health outcomes in all corners of the United Kingdom, the present regime should be overhauled immediately.

PIP assessments, in particular, must be significantly reformed. According to many of those who use our services, the process demeans individuals experiencing mental ill health, leaving them anxious, worried and, often, feeling even more unwell than before. The UK Government must focus on creating evidence-led and knowledge-based assessments, underpinned by extensive mental health training and education.

The next UK Government can also take immediate action to ease the burden on people by removing universal credit's two-child limit and resolving the five-week wait between the initial claim for universal credit and the first payment.

PRIORITY 3

Immigration and asylum: migrant and refugee mental health

Northern Ireland plays its part in the international community by offering safety to those leaving behind traumatising, life-threatening situations. People fleeing foreign wars, political violence and religious persecution are dealing with very specific mental health challenges, challenges that may then be exacerbated by the complexities of the asylum system and obstacles encountered by migrant communities everywhere.

Responsibility for asylum seekers and refugees remains with the UK Government. Therefore, the Home Office must work with the health and social care sector to resource and implement a comprehensive, compassionate and multi-disciplinary mental health strategy for asylum seekers and refugees. This should correspond with the recommendations of the WHO by rolling out wide-ranging support for these groups. Such a strategy must focus on: addressing and supporting migrants', asylum seekers' and refugees' needs; providing immediate care; breaking down barriers to accessing services; and facilitating the engagement of multiple agencies in order to integrate support.

PRIORITY 4

UK Government and MPs: tackling stigma through language

Mental illness, intellectual disabilities and drug and alcohol use are complex issues. Discussing them in everyday terms can prove difficult. Using the right words can have a powerful, hopeful impact on people living with these conditions, just as negative terminology – which is very often employed without malice – can wound and stigmatise those same individuals. Following on from our UK-wide If It's Okay campaign, we are calling on all elected representatives to lead on this important subject.

The UK Government can set an example by promoting positive language in its public statements and talking about these matters in sensitive ways. Ministers and members of parliament should be ambassadors, tackling mental health stigma and establishing high standards for vital popular, political and media discourse.





inspire

wellbeing, ability, recovery

Inspire Wellbeing

028 9032 8474

hello@inspirewellbeing.org

#TeamInspire

For more information about our services, visit:

www.inspirewellbeing.org

     **/InspireWBGroup**