

Message from Liam Byrne MP, Minister for the West Midlands

“I’m sorry that I can’t be with you for the launch of these important reports.

I would like to send my congratulations to Birmingham City University, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust, the Irish Welfare and Information Centre, Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy, the Federation of Irish Societies and all of the other organisations involved in contributing to this important piece of work.



The Irish community in Birmingham plays a huge role in the life of the city. The cultural, sporting, economic and public life of Birmingham has been greatly influenced by you, and the new Irish Quarter currently being developed is testament to that positive contribution that you make to society here in Birmingham, the West Midlands and indeed across the country.

But we know too that many in the Irish community suffer from poorer health, and that mental health is one area where this is most prevalent. I know that the Federation of Irish Societies meet regularly with senior officials in the Department of Health to press them on these issues, and I know too that Irish organisations work collaboratively with their local Primary Care Trusts to provide counselling and other mental health support services for Irish people.

I’m pleased that under this Government more funding has been made available for mental health services than at anytime before, and that massive investment in the NHS has helped so many more people to avail of these services. These reports will hopefully draw attention to the gaps in provision that exist and help those in the statutory sector identify ways to address them, working together with the Irish community and the Irish voluntary sector.

I want, finally, to commend the work of all of those involved in these projects, none more so than the participants from the Irish community who shared their often difficult experiences with the researchers and interviewers. They deserve our admiration and support, and I am sure that these reports will be a key factor in ensuring that their needs are met.”

Liam Byrne MP