



Cumann Síceolaithe Éireann

The Psychological Society of Ireland

**Pre-budget 2023 Submission:
Fund Ireland's Psychological
Future**

10 August 2022

Fund Ireland's Psychological Future

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is the learned and professional body for psychologists in Ireland. The Society is active in the promotion of psychological knowledge and practice; engaging and developing its members; and, bringing the insights of psychological knowledge to the benefit of society as a whole. Established in 1970, the Society currently has almost 4,000 members.

Ireland is experiencing an unprecedented demand for psychological support in primary care ([10,500 children waiting](#)), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services ([4,000 children waiting](#)), and Children's Disability Network Teams ([28% posts unfilled](#)). The Health Service Executive (HSE) [Report of the National Psychology Project Team](#) estimated a need for an additional 322 psychologists in mental health services alone. The 2021 [Government Disability Capacity Review to 2032](#) stated that the number of psychologists in disability services needs to double by the year 2032.

Each year approximately 100 psychologists enter professional training programmes. Only trainee clinical psychologists are paid during training, and the lack of salary and contribution to university fees (the HSE pays for 60% of trainee clinical psychology fees) is unacceptable. These factors are unjustifiable barriers to those who wish to enter one of the professional training programmes in counselling or educational psychology.

The key to the delivery of high-quality psychological services is the sufficient availability of skilled and trained personnel; however, there are significant shortfalls in the provision of psychological services due to inadequate staffing levels resulting in long waiting lists and significant difficulties in both the recruitment and retention of trained staff. One of the critical factors is the insufficient number of funded postgraduate training places.

In 2000, under the leadership of the then Minister for Health Mr Micheál Martin, T.D., the Department of Health and Children responded swiftly to the requirement for the provision of extra training places. In September 2000, the Department approved the availability of funding for a total of 30 additional trainee posts for three years.

The PSI calls upon the Government and the Taoiseach in Budget 2023 to show the leadership shown in 2000, and respond just as swiftly in 2022 to provide multi-annual funding to address the significant gaps in Ireland's psychological workforce.

The PSI is urging the Government to:

1. Fund trainee counselling and educational psychology courses to the same level as their trainee clinical psychology counterparts. There are, on average, 35 places between both doctoral courses per year which would necessitate funding of €1.715 million per year (salary and 60% of university fees).

2. Fund an additional 50 trainee psychologist posts across the professional doctoral programmes for a five-year period which would necessitate an additional €2.45 million in funding per year (€12.25 million over the five years).
3. To coordinate the management and placement of current and increased numbers of trainees, the Government must fund with immediate effect the establishment of a National Psychology Placement Office as the HSE has recommended, which requires the funding of €770,000 per year.

Funding Ireland's psychological future cannot wait.