



Press Release – Friday 09 September 2022

## **Psychological Society of Ireland calls for the implementation of National Traveller Mental Health Strategy**

To coincide with the year's World Suicide Prevention Day, which takes place on Saturday 10 September, the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is calling for the urgent implementation of the National Traveller Mental Health Strategy.

In working with the Traveller Visibility Group from Cork, the PSI is using World Suicide Prevention Day to draw attention to suicide within the Travelling community and the urgent need for a Traveller mental health strategy.

Research shows that 90% of Travellers agree that mental health problems are common in the Travelling community, with 82% of the community having been affected by suicide. Irish Travellers constitute less than 1% of the Irish population; however, account for 10% of national young adult male suicide statistics. Travellers are a high-risk group for suicide as suicide is six times higher for Travellers than the general population.

In October 2018, it was recommended by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health Care that as Sláintecare was being implemented, a portion of the 10% increase for mental health services be ring-fenced as a priority for a National Traveller Mental Health Strategy. However, almost four years on no such strategy has been delivered. In July of this year, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee published their concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Ireland, with some notable recommendations for Travellers, including a prompt follow-through on the National Traveller Mental Health Action Plan.

As the PSI calls for the urgent implementation of the National Traveller Mental Health Strategy, Society President Dr Vincent McDarby states: "There is simply not enough being done to combat the mental health crisis and suicide rates within the Travelling community. Members of the Psychological Society of Ireland have worked closely with the Traveller Visibility Group from Cork to listen to the mental health needs within their community. Whilst the Cork group only represents a small number of the national Travelling community, I would hope that the PSI supporting the call for the urgent implementation of the National Traveller Mental Health Strategy lends support to Travellers around Ireland."

**ENDS.**

For further information, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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**Points to note:**

- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with almost 4,000 members, is the learned and professional body for the profession in the Republic of Ireland, with the primary object of advancing psychology as an applied science in Ireland and elsewhere.
- Connect with the PSI through [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).