



## Update on the Statutory Regulation of Psychologists December 2022

CORU is currently preparing to regulate the psychology profession. Psychologists provide care and support to vulnerable people and were designated for regulation under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).

Regulation has been a positive development for each of the professions CORU has regulated. The vast majority of Ireland's psychologists are outstanding professionals and statutory regulation sends a powerful message about each psychologist's commitment to consistently deliver to the highest standards.

Most importantly, regulation provides greater protection for the public. Members of the public can have confidence in knowing that a professional's standing and qualifications have been independently verified. They also know that if there is a failure in the delivery of care from a CORU registered professional, CORU will investigate any complaint under our fitness to practise process.

### **Developing the Regulatory Framework**

The Psychologists Registration Board (PSRB) was established in 2017. Since then, it has been working to introduce statutory regulation to the psychology profession in Ireland, consistently guided by the principle of delivering public protection. In considering the most appropriate approach to regulate this profession, the Board undertook in-depth research. This included analysis of systems of regulation in other countries and legal advice on the options available under the existing legislation.

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes and Standards of Proficiency for the profession were drafted and published in 2020. These were drafted in the context of the current legislation, which states that there must be one common set of qualification requirements and one register for the entire profession.

The Board recognised that this approach would lead to a fundamental and significant change in the psychology profession in Ireland. A public consultation was held on the draft standards and this consultation confirmed that they presented significant challenges for the profession.

The Board and the Health and Social Care Professions Council (Council), which oversees and co-ordinates the work of the registration boards, sought guidance from the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD. The Minister requested that the Board and Council consider a dual stream and phased approach to regulating the profession. This will involve consideration of the regulation of specific psychology specialisms, prioritising those which present the greatest risk to public safety while



simultaneously continuing to work towards the longer term objective of protection of the title psychologist.

The Board is now examining which psychology specialisms should be prioritised for regulation in order to make a recommendation to the Minister for Health, who, in accordance with the legislation will sanction the specialisms to be regulated.

The Board and Council remain fully committed to protecting the title of “psychologist” for the protection of the public and for the benefit of the many professional psychologists working in Ireland.