



Press Release – Friday 14 January 2022

Psychological Society of Ireland calls on the Minister for Health to address the disparity in funding for psychology trainees

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), the learned and professional body for psychology in the Republic of Ireland, is calling on Minister Donnelly to address the disparity in funding for psychology trainees in Ireland to ensure the country has the psychological workforce it needs. The PSI has received over 2,400 signatures in support of the call to address this inequality in funding.

Currently trainee clinical psychologists have 60% of their fees paid and receive a student salary starting at €33,000, while counselling and educational/child trainee psychologists pay fees of between €12,000 and €15,000 per year and do a minimum of 300 hours unpaid work throughout the duration of their study.

The PSI believes that one of the greatest barriers to getting qualified psychologists into the workforce is the inequity that counselling and educational trainees must self-fund for the full period of their doctoral training as well as pay €14,000 per year in university fees.

The PSI has advocated with previous government Ministers to work with PSI to find ways to alleviate the burden of fees on trainee counselling and educational psychologists, and address the glaring inequity which results in trainee clinical psychologists having 60% of their university fees being paid by the HSE but other trainees having to pay the full €15,000. The PSI estimates that this could be addressed through 1.5m in funding per year.

The PSI has also expressed concerns about a number of issues in relation to the recruitment and retention of psychologists and believes that these need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

For many years there has been a growing imperative to expand our psychological workforce in Ireland and this imperative has escalated because of the psychological impact that COVID-19 has had on our population. A HSE mental health workforce planning report, and more recently, the

Disability Capacity Review to 2032 have identified that there is a significant shortfall in the number of psychologists meeting the needs of their respective areas. The disability capacity review estimated a minimum of doubling of the number of psychologists in child disability services alone would be needed to meet the demands which is directly relevant to the successful implementation of Progressing Disability Services (PDS), of which Psychology is a core discipline.

PSI President Dr Vincent McDarby states: "There is no justifiable reason why trainee counselling or educational psychologists should not also be paid during training while they support the mental health and emotional and educational needs of the most vulnerable.

"One of the greatest barriers to getting qualified psychologists into the workforce is the inequity that counselling and educational trainees must self-fund for the full period of their doctoral training as well as pay €14,000 per year in university fees. This results in many not being able to afford to enter the profession or only a select few who can afford to self-fund, which risks the psychological workforce not being representative of the full socio-economic spectrum of the community they represent and support."

ENDS.

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

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Note to Editor

- See the *PSI Letter to Minister Donnelly* in full [here](#).
- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with circa 4,000 members, is the professional body for psychology and psychologists in Ireland.
- The PSI is committed to maintaining high standards of practice in psychology and also to exploring new and innovative ways of furthering psychology as a real and applied science.