



Press Release: Thursday 18 April 2024

PSI Welcomes Government Prioritisation of the Mental Health Bill Following Minister Butler’s Announcement

18 April 2024: As the learned and professional body for the psychology profession in the Republic of Ireland, The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), welcomes the Minister for Mental Health and Older People’s announcement that the new Mental Health Bill has been selected for priority publication for the current legislative session.

The Society contends that the prioritisation of the publication of the new Bill, to ultimately replace the Mental Health Act 2001, is timely given the well documented rise in mental health needs in Ireland. The PSI is assured that the new Mental Health Bill is person-centred and will protect and deliver the rights of people with mental health difficulties, as has been the PSI’s core advocacy focus regarding the Bill.

The PSI and its 4,300 members aspire to Ireland being a society where the psychological wellbeing of all is appreciated, acknowledged, and supported. It appreciates Minister Butler’s openness to engage with the PSI and other stakeholder organisations focused on mental health, and it expects this support to continue as the Bill progresses to its publication in the coming months.

Commenting on the announcement, PSI CEO Sheena Horgan said: *“This latest announcement, whilst a long time coming, clearly signals the political appetite and will to progress the addressing of Ireland’s mental health needs. Given the comprehensive content of the Bill, as indicated in the PSI’s discussions with the Minister, the Bill and subsequent Act has the potential to positively improve mental health service delivery and supports in the future.”*

ENDS

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Notes to the Editor:

- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with over 4,300 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 [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).
- See the Department of Health press release [here](#).
- As per information from Minister Butler's office:
 - The Mental Health Bill will replace the existing Mental Health Acts 2001 – 2018 and is primarily based on the General Scheme of a Bill to amend the Mental Health Act, 2001, published by the Government in July 2021.
 - The Bill will provide for, among other things:
 - an updated involuntary admission and detention process for people with severe mental health difficulties, including a revised set of criteria for detention,
 - an overhauled approach to consent to treatment for involuntarily admitted people,
 - an expansion of the Mental Health Commission's regulatory function to include all community mental health residences and services, including all community CAMHS,
 - closer alignment with the principles of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Acts 2015 and 2022,
 - stronger safeguards for people accessing inpatient treatment, and
 - a new, discrete Part of the Bill that deals exclusively with the care and treatment of children and young people, which includes provisions to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to consent to or refuse mental health treatment.
 - The Bill was subject to extensive consultation both during the current drafting process and prior to the publication of the General Scheme in July 2021, including ongoing consultation with the Mental Health Commission, regulator of mental health services, and the HSE, as the main provider of mental health provides in the State. Additionally, the Department of Health has consulted with other key stakeholders during its drafting such as the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, the Psychological Society of Ireland, the HSE's Engagement and Recovery Team, the Irish Hospital Consultants Association, Mental Health Reform and the Ombudsman for Children. Minister Butler launched a public consultation prior to the publication of the General Scheme which received 100 written submissions, all of which were considered in full prior to the publication of the General Scheme.