



**Press release – Wednesday 21
February 2024**

Children’s Rights Alliance Report Card 2024: Lowest Grades are in Mental Health

Wednesday, 21 February, 2024: Following the launch yesterday of the [Children’s Rights Alliance \(CRA\) Report Card 2024](#), the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) asserts the need to mobilise a mental health movement that puts human rights at its heart and children first.

Whilst the CRA’s Report Card 2024 covers many issues faced by children today, the lowest grades relate to issues concerning mental health, which is also one of the two spotlight areas in the [Young Ireland National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028](#).

The PSI and its membership are resolutely dedicated to advocating for the upholding of children’s rights, and testament to this commitment is human rights being one of the strategic themes for the PSI Strategy 2024-2026. It is the professional and moral duty of the psychological community to advocate for children’s right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health as per The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which Ireland ratified in 1992.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child endorses a public health and psychosocial support approach to mental health and reviews States that ratify the Convention accordingly. As cited in the CRA Report Card when reviewed by the Committee in 2023, Ireland came up short. Grave concerns were noted relating to mental health policy for children and young people, insufficient and inadequate services, long waiting lists, the placement of children in adult psychiatric wards, the impact that racism and discrimination is having on the mental health of children from ethnic minorities, and the slow progress in developing a mental health action plan for Traveller and Roma children.

It is disappointing to see the continuation and in some case deterioration of the standards that relate to these concerns in this Report Card.

The evidence and reporting of systemic racism and marginalisation, of children from traveller, refugee and other communities is continually growing and intersecting with mounting homeless (3,962) and food poverty issues. The CRA and its report make clear the pressing need for greater education, policy and social interventions and preventions, for the increasingly vulnerable and fragile constituencies of Irish society.

Not in the report but noted at the launch, was the [UNCRC's recent issuing of commitments to climate action](#). The mental health and wellbeing ripple effects of the environmental climate crisis, specifically on children and young people, are relentless and deep. This was the clear message also at the Psychological Society of Ireland's Special Interest Group in Addressing Climate and Environmental Emergency (SIG ACEE) event in September 2023 - [A New Climate for Psychology](#). This will also be a continuing theme for the PSI's 2024-2026 Strategy.

The PSI welcomes the Report Card and the significant and critical work of the CRA. As a member of the Alliance, we re-iterate our support of working collaboratively to further our collective undertaking and responsibility to protect and to champion children's rights. As a 4,500-strong membership body, the PSI will canvas our membership on the work and potential of psychology in relation to the Report Card, to clarify the substantive actions psychology can deliver.

ENDS.

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

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Note to the Editor:

- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with over 4,500 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](#).