



**Press Release – Wednesday 23 March
2022**

Psychological Society of Ireland calls for urgent action by HSE to protect psychologists from being directed to engage in unlawful procedures

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), the learned and professional body for psychology in the Republic of Ireland, is calling on the Health Service Executive (HSE), Government, and trade unions to urgently act to protect psychologists from being directed to engage in unlawful procedures related to the Preliminary Team Assessment (PTA).

The PSI notes the recent [High Court Judicial Review](#) by Ms Justice Siobhán Phelan delivered on 11 March 2022, in which Justice Phelan concluded that “*there is an error of law as to the interpretation of Part 2 assessment requirements, as reflected in the terms of the SOP, which renders the assessments unlawful.*” This judgement is welcomed by the PSI as a validation of the [concerns PSI has been expressing](#) since 2018 prior to the implementation of the Assessment of Need (AON) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

PSI president Dr Vincent McDarby states: “Following the judgement of Ms Justice Siobhán Phelan, PSI members working within the HSE have now been placed in the invidious position of being directed by their employer to continue with a practice that their professional body has decreed is against their code of ethics and now the courts have deemed to be unlawful.

“We have witnessed an unprecedented haemorrhaging of psychologists from child disability services since the introduction of the PTA at a time when Government has identified a need for a [100% increase in psychologists](#) in child disability services. The expectation by an employer that PSI members should be expected to continue with a practice deemed by the courts to be unlawful is beyond any comprehension.

“The HSE, Government, and trade unions have to immediately act to protect psychologists from being directed to engage in unlawful procedures related to the Preliminary Team Assessment or we risk a further increase in the recruitment and retention crisis of psychologists in child disability services of a magnitude never experienced before.”

ENDS.

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

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To note:

- The PSI, with circa 4,000 members, is the professional body for psychology and psychologists in the Republic of 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 an applied science.