



Press release – Tuesday 20 April 2021

Government funding needed to address pay inequality among trainee psychologists

Joint press release issued by the Union of Students in Ireland and the Psychological Society of Ireland on 20.04.21 at 11am

The disparity in funding for psychology trainees in Ireland must be addressed by Government to ensure the country has the psychological workforce it needs, according to the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI).

Currently trainee clinical psychologists have 60 per cent 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.

At the recent USI Congress, a motion was passed by delegates mandating the USI President and Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with PSI to campaign for funding of €1.5 million to eliminate this inequality.

All three strands of psychology are recognised qualifications for staff psychology posts in the HSE, meaning that all trainees are eligible for the same posts.

In the UK, trainee psychologists in all strands receive a salary for the duration of their studies.

USI President, Lorna Fitzpatrick said: “This inequality amongst psychological trainees is deeply unfair and must not continue. All students deserve to be paid a fair wage for any work carried out as part of their education. To make this a reality we need a political commitment now to end this inequity by providing the necessary funding to remove the barrier of the lack of a salary for trainee counselling and educational/child psychologists.”

“Funding is needed urgently to eliminate this inequity and to ensure we have the psychological workforce we need to begin to meet the psychological needs of our country.”

PSI Past President, Mark Smyth said: “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.

“There is no integrity in a system that has a 100 per cent plus pay differential between colleagues providing a similar service. An immediate plan is needed from Government detailing when, and how, they will bring this inequity to an end.”

ENDS

Notes:

- The Union of Students in Ireland represents over 374,000 students across the island of Ireland.
- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with circa 3,800 members, is the professional body for psychology and psychologists in Ireland.

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

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