



Press Release- 2 January 2024

Defining and protecting ‘psychologist’ critical to protect the public: The Psychological Society of Ireland submission to CORU

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) has made a submission to the CORU Expert Advisory Group on the Regulation of Psychologists, for its preliminary assessment. PSI welcomes CORU and the Expert Advisory Group's recognition of the need for stakeholder input, offering its support to the process of shaping regulation and its considerable experience of the practice of psychology in Ireland over the years.

In the submission PSI re-iterates CORU, the PSRB, and the Department of Health published statements that they are “fully committed to delivering regulation of this very important profession through protection of the title of ‘psychologist’”.

The submission emphasises the Society’s commitment to protecting the public and strongly argues that safeguarding the title 'psychologist' offers the greatest protection. Acknowledging that this is part of CORU’s current dual approach to regulation, PSI recommends alternatives to a one-size-fits-all approach to address the complexities of competencies and the need to articulate clear standards for practitioners in an ever-evolving profession.

The PSI Chartership Model and Divisions

The submission contends that the chartership model allows for the recognition of specialisms in addition to the protection of the term ‘psychologist’ itself. Currently, a third of PSI members (1,501) hold the Chartered Psychologist title and a substantial number of Graduate members

(currently 2,255) may at some stage in the future progress to chartership as they move forward in their careers. Furthermore, the chartership model can assure that psychologists meet high standards of the competencies which CORU has defined to include: areas of knowledge; skill; autonomy in practice; client groups worked with; and environments worked within.

The submission explains that within PSI's chartership model there are 11 specialist PSI Divisions that reflect the diversity of the public's needs and specialisms within the profession. Division members share knowledge and experience, and professional development. They uphold standards for professional practice within each area, and as such may also act as helpful guides going forward.

Health and Social Care Professionals

CORU's psychology regulation remit is only on the delivery of health or social care services. Those who provide health or social care services, but not under the title of 'psychologist' may or may not be provided for by another CORU register (e.g. under the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Register).

Psychologists outside of health or social care may either be on the register or not, depending on how the register develops and PSI is calling for provisions to be made to ensure they can use the term 'psychologist' as appropriate. This would 'future proof' CORU's regulation of the profession and allow for emerging specialisms, which may include elements of health or social care practice, to develop from research-based programmes.

Public Trust – A Collective Commitment

PSI re-affirms its deep commitment to protecting the safety of the public. Regulation it believes, is essential to ensure the general public receive quality psychological services and to avoid misconception or confusion regarding who is sufficiently competent to deliver these services. PSI asserts there is a collective responsibility to address this.

To inform the public about the pathways to chartered membership of the PSI, and what this represents in terms of competency and proficiency, PSI plans to roll out a national public awareness and education campaign in 2024, and hopes to align its information and messaging with CORU, in the best interests of the public.

ENDS.

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

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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 [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- Criteria for PSI Chartered Membership is outlined on the [PSI Membership](#) page