



Press statement – Friday 6 October 2023

For immediate release

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) statement regarding legal aid cases requiring psychological assessment

“As the learned and professional body for the profession in the Republic of Ireland, the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with over 4,000 members, believes the reduction of hours allowed for psychological assessments in criminal legal aid cases needs to be urgently addressed.

As it currently stands, assessments in these cases are capped at 18 hours of time regardless of clinical need which may be sufficient for some less complex assessments but is not sufficient for complex cases which can merit circa 30 hours of clinical time. By contrast, the psychologists appointed by the DPP can conduct thorough assessments if clinically required with no such time limit.

This practice is clearly inequitable, and the restriction can result in a clinical report that is compromised and may not be sufficient to plan and implement treatment. It blatantly discriminates against those without the means to fund assessments privately.

Legal aid cases are further compromised by the disparity in psychologist's fees: criminal legal aid pays €100 per hour which is 46% less the DPP hourly rate of €184. Parity must be restored between the DPP and criminal legal aid not only on ethical grounds, but also as a matter of public interest because the taxpayer funds both the DPP and criminal legal aid”.

ENDS

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To note:

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with over 4,000 members, is the learned and professional body for the profession in the Republic of Ireland, with the primary objective of advancing psychology as an applied science in Ireland and elsewhere.

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