

IRISH ASSOCIATION
FOR COUNSELLING
AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2021



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IACP.IE

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In response to the rapidly growing demand for counselling and psychotherapy, the IACP calls on the Government to make provision for additional counselling and psychotherapy supports for those who need them. The IACP is calling for the following three measures to be implemented:

1. Providing financial supports to those needing access to counselling and psychotherapy services.

This can be achieved by:

- A. By providing tax relief for counselling and psychotherapy sessions on the same basis as is provided for other medical expenses
- B. By extending medical card services to include access to counsellors and psychotherapists
- C. Extending the benefits under the PRSI system to include counselling and psychotherapy services

A 2019 IACP public survey conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes B&A revealed that while 92% of Irish adults think it's a good idea to seek counselling/psycho-therapeutic support if struggling with mental health, affordability is a barrier to seeking this support.

The B&A research has shown that there is very strong support among Irish adults for a move towards universal availability and State funding of counselling/psychotherapy. A means to increase accessibility not only for people on low income but also for the generality of the people in Ireland is to make counselling and psychotherapy services more affordable. The IACP urges that serious consideration be given to expanding the existing supports which provide tax relief for medical expenses, a range of health-related benefits under the PRSI system, and medical card services to include support for mental health services such as counselling and psychotherapy.

2. The same VAT Exemption for Counsellors and Psychotherapists as available to other allied health professionals.

Under current legislation, Counsellors and Psychotherapists must register for VAT once their total income/turnover for services exceeds the threshold of €37,500 per annum. This rate of VAT is the reduced rate of 13.5%. However, other allied health professionals such as Psychologists qualify for the exemption as a medical service. Psychologists along with other allied health professionals have had a VAT exemption prior to being regulated. IACP requests that Counselling & Psychotherapy receive the same VAT exemption status as other allied health professionals.

3. Provide increased access for children and young people to therapeutic mental health supports via the introduction of a counselling support service for second-level schools.

It is the IACP's recommendation that the next budget provides a specific funding allocation for such a service. The IACP is proposing that a study be undertaken to assess how counselling supports for second-level schools can be established in Ireland. Similar school-based services are already in place in the UK, and these services continue to be both successful and cost-effective.

This counselling support service could be provided by accredited IACP members and accessed by schools for students on an as needed basis. This would enable timely interventions for children and young people in need of such supports and would also address the identified gaps in and waiting lists for existing services. The number of referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) increased by over 40% from approx. 12,800 in 2011 to 18,100 in 2019*

Moreover, the numbers of children and young people on waiting lists for CAMHS at the end of last year was almost 2,000**.

ABOUT IRISH ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY



The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) was established in 1981, to identify, develop and maintain professional standards of excellence in counselling and psychotherapy. Our work promotes best practice and the development of the profession. The IACP represents over 4,500 members and is the largest Counselling and Psychotherapy Association in Ireland.

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To connect with a counsellor/psychotherapist in your area please see our nationwide directory of members at www.iacp.ie.

The IACP provides a link between those who are looking for Counselling/Psychotherapy and those who provide Counselling/Psychotherapy.



Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

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References:

* Houses of the Oireachtas. (13th March 2019). Child and Adolescents Mental Health Services. Dáil Éireann Debate.

** HSE. (2019). Performance Profile July – September 2019: Quarterly Report. Retrieved from

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/performance-reports/july-to-september-quarterly-report.pdf>.



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