

**GOVT MUST PRIORITISE MENTAL HEALTH OF OUR SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN.**

*The IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) calls on the Government to prioritize the introduction of school-based therapeutic counselling.*

Dublin, Ireland.

Ireland is experiencing a mental health crisis across all age groups, including our school going children. A presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Mental Health (2018), highlighted the shocking figure that 70 Irish children, of school-going age, died by suicide in 2017.

“Urgent action is required to reverse this shocking statistic. In response to this and other alarming trends the IACP is proposing that a school-based therapeutic counselling service in our second level schools needs to be established as a matter of priority” say IACP CEO Lisa Molloy, “Our members are ready to provide this service within a State funded school-based structure.” In addition to providing timely professional therapeutic interventions to school-going children, it is intended that this service will also provide much needed support to the over-burdened Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Teachers and other professionals working in schools. Similar school-based services are already in place in the UK, and these services continue to be both successful and cost-effective.

The IACP proposes that action must be taken to gain consensus on the best way forward from all relevant stakeholders. The obvious platform to enable this collaborative approach is Pathfinder. The IACP is calling for the immediate initiation of Pathfinder, and urges that it pursue the funding, and delivery, of this critical school-based counselling service as its first priority.

The IACP will present their vision for school-based therapeutic counselling in second level schools in Leinster House on Wednesday 8th May. The presentation will be facilitated by Senator Colette Kelleher (Ind) and the IACP will be joined by their counterparts from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) who will demonstrate the success of similar initiatives in the UK.

Notes to the Editor:

Pathfinder is an interdepartmental initiative, that was recommended in the National Youth Mental Health Task Force Report (2017), with the aim to examine and address issues affecting youth mental health in Ireland.

**About IACP:**

The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy ~~are-is~~ the largest professional association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists in Ireland. With over 4,500 members, IACP ~~are-is~~ devoted to creating the highest professional standards for our members and acting as a bridge between our members and their clients.

**Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy**

**Contact:** Hugh O’Donoghue –

Communications & Media Officer



+353 (0) 12147933

+353 (0)877806033

[hugh@iacp.ie](mailto:hugh@iacp.ie)

iacp.ie