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By Email only

Date: 6th October 2023

Mr. Mark Ward TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ Ref 39265/23 -

PQ Question:

“To ask the Minister for Health for a comprehensive breakdown of funding for trainee counselling psychology positions at Trinity College Dublin; what options are available to students in positions that are unfunded; if efforts will be made to fund these positions; and if he will make a statement on the matter”. -Mark Ward

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Dear Deputy/Minister,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you directly in relation to the above parliamentary question which you submitted to the Minister of Health for response. In relation to your recent correspondence regarding the funding of the counselling psychology course in Trinity College Dublin (TCD), I have investigated the matter and wish to advise the following.

A doctoral level qualification is required to practice in most branches of psychology following on from previous related study. Places for such training are in high demand. The counselling psychology doctoral training programme in TCD has been training counselling psychologists for many years on a self-funding basis. Some of the graduates of this programme will join the HSE while others may choose to work in the private practice or in other positions outside of the HSE.

Subsequent to the announcement of €750K in the 2023 budget for the funding of counselling psychology training, the Department of Health liaised with TCD & the HSE and examined options for the distribution of same. For the first time, this has enabled 10 of the new 14 trainees in counselling psychology in Ireland in 2023, to be funded as HSE employees, and 10 each of the 14 trainees in second and third year respectively will be offered 60% of their fees plus an additional sum.

A recruitment campaign took place in April 2023 and 10 trainee contracts were offered by the HSE, and 4 self-funded places were offered by TCD. Interviews were conducted in line with the provisions of the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) and funded places were offered and allocated on the basis of merit. We acknowledge that 4 of the incoming places to the counselling course remain self-funded places offered by TCD.



The HSE remains committed to workforce planning for all professions and will be keeping the funding of these posts under review in the coming years to ensure that the health services maintain an adequate supply of psychologists.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Reed

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