Feidhmeannas Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Report of the Review Group

Eligibility Criteria for Recruitment of Psychologists to the Health Service Executive

May 2016

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1. Introduction

This review was commissioned by the National Director of Human Resources in the context of significant organisational change and re-alignment in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Commission for Public Service Appointments Reports (CPSA)2013) on recruitment of psychologists. A national working group was established to carry out the review with representatives from the National Recruitment Service, National Human Resources and Principal Psychology Managers.

Sections 2 and 3 provide details of membership of the review group, terms of reference and the parameters within which they were to be considered.

Section 4 outlines the historical context of the development of psychology services and professional psychology training programmes in Ireland.

Section 5 outlines the consultation process, key stakeholders and the methodology applied to carry out the review.

Section 6 summarises feedback from the various parties and details the discussion with an external expert.

Section 7 outlines the recommendations of the review group.

2. Membership of Review Group

Michael Casserly, Independent Chairperson
Finola Doran National Recruitment Services Campaign Manager, Health Business Services
Mary Doran, National Recruitment Services Manager, Health Business Services
Paddy Duggan, Workforce Planning, Informatics & Analytics, National HR Directorate
Carmel Breaden, Principal Psychology Manager Community Health Organisation Area 8
Edmond O'Dea, Principal Psychology Manager Community Health Organisation Area 3
Teresa O'Mahony, Principal Psychology Manager Community Health Organisation Area 6
Gerard Perry, Director of Psychology, HSE Eastern Region
Kieran Woods, Principal Psychology Manager Community Health Organisation Area 1

3. Terms of Reference

1. To review the current recruitment care group delineations and make appropriate recommendations.
2. To review the eligibility requirements for each care group in the context of competencies for the posts and the PSI accreditation guidelines.
3. The working group will finalise proceedings, conclude their recommendations and provide a report to the Director of Human Resources within six months of being constituted.
4. An independent chairperson will be appointed and membership of the Group will include a representative number of HSE Psychology Service Managers, representatives from National Human Resources and Health Business Services-National Recruitment.

The review group was tasked with applying the terms of reference within the following parameters:

1. Models of care and service user safety
2. Current recruitment model in operation for psychologists
3. HSE Recruitment licence and associated codes of practice
4. Government policy
5. Maximising resources and flexibility in response to service need
6. Developments in training and education in professional psychology disciplines.

4. Context

4.1 Development of Psychology in the Health Services

Employment of psychologists in the Irish Health Services began in the mid-sixties. Mirroring developments in the United Kingdom, the initial cohort of psychologists recruited were all employed as clinical psychologists mainly within mental health services. This practice was formally recognised with the introduction of the Department of Health (DoH) regulations in 1979 governing the recruitment of psychologists which related specifically to clinical psychology. In 1985, the Department of Health defined the criteria for the grade of Psychologist Community Care to include the qualifications of clinical, educational or community psychology or two years of appropriate clinical experience. This expansion of the regulations reflected the emergence of Community Care Programmes within the health services and provided the catalyst for the expansion of psychology services beyond mental health.

A Ministerial Directive dated October 2002 set out the revised requirements for both clinical psychologists and community care psychologists. These revisions stated that candidates must "possess a recognised postgraduate professional psychological qualification appropriate to the area of professional psychology in which the post was designated" (Ministerial Directive October 2002).

Under Section 22 of the Health Act 2004, the HSE has authority to set eligibility requirements for recruitment and appointments. In 2009 the HSE reviewed the qualifications for psychologists and specified that applicants must hold a post-graduate professional psychological qualification recognised by the professional body, the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) in clinical, counselling or educational psychology appropriate to the area of professional psychology in which the position is designated or equivalent qualifications validated by the Department of Health in the case of applicants with non Irish qualifications.

The history of these regulations demonstrate that prior to 1985 the only professional psychology qualification recognised by the DoH was that of clinical psychology. In 1985 the DoH named educational psychology as a recognised qualification for employment in the Irish health service and in 2009, the HSE did likewise with counselling psychology (Approved Eligibility Criteria, National HR dated 23.07.2009).

In the Irish health service, professionally qualified clinical, counselling and educational psychologists are currently employed either directly through the Health Services Executive (HSE) or by voluntary service providers funded by the HSE. Following recent restructuring, HSE psychology services are in the main delivered through nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) providing services through five Service Divisions (Acute Hospitals, Primary Care; Mental Health; Social Care and Health and Wellbeing).

4.2 Development of Professional Training in Psychology

In the early 1970s, in order to address the growing need for clinical psychologists and in the absence of formal training programmes, a clinical psychology apprenticeship in-service model was established within the Health Boards.

In 1978, clinical psychology training accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) was developed by the Eastern Health Board in collaboration with the University of Dublin, Trinity College (TCD). Successful trainees were awarded the BPS Diploma in Clinical Psychology. This led in 1992 to the establishment of a clinical psychology training programme in TCD. In 1983, University College Dublin (UCD) established a clinical psychology training programme in conjunction with Health Boards.

Currently, there are four doctoral level clinical psychology training programmes that have developed through and operate in partnership with the HSE. They are based at the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), University of Dublin, Trinity College (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), and the University of Limerick (UL). All four clinical psychology training programmes have, as required by the Accreditation Standards of PSI, a central purpose which is to train professionally qualified clinical psychologists to work in the Irish health service.

Parallel to the development of the partnership approach to clinical training between the HSE and the university sector, PSI established its own in-service professional training programme for clinical psychology in 1992 in response to a request by the Department of Health to help meet the demand for psychologists at that time. This course was discontinued in 2010. In 2015, approval was granted to establish a post graduate clinical psychology training programme in University College Cork (UCC).

An educational psychology professional training programme at Masters level was established in 1995 in UCD. This became a doctoral level programme in September 2015. Mary Immaculate College Limerick established a professional training programme at Masters level in 2010. PSI established its own in service Educational Psychology training programme in 1993 which was discontinued in 2005.

A one year counselling psychology professional training programme was established in TCD in 1989. This became a two year Masters level programme in 1991 and progressed to doctoral level in 2009. University College Cork (UCC) also offered a Masters level Counselling Psychology training programme. This was discontinued in 2010.

In addition to the training programmes in existence throughout the 1990s, PSI had in place a process to enable individuals to transfer from one discipline of professional psychology to another which was referred to as Lateral Transfer. A Statement of Equivalence was provided for this purpose. This has since been discontinued.

4.3 Recruitment

While Health Boards themselves could recruit and employ psychologists on a temporary basis, the permanent recruitment of psychologists was through the Local Appointments Commission (LAC) and subsequently the Public Appointments Service (PAS). The LAC and PAS are independent civil service bodies who recruited in accordance with the Ministerial Regulations governing the particular profession. From 1985 until 2009, psychologists were recruited to positions under two categories (i) Clinical Psychologist and (ii) Psychologist in Community Care.

The LAC and PAS competitions were organised to recruit nationally to a grade i.e. Basic or Senior, rather than to specific posts. Psychologists who were successful at LAC and PAS interviews were placed on national panels for the grade for which they had applied. Concerns were expressed by Heads of Psychology Service Ireland (HPSI) that this recruitment model did not allow the interview process to assess competencies for the areas in which the posts were designated.

In 2009, a sub-group of the HSE Recruitment/Psychology Working Group was established to examine how to best manage the recruitment of psychologists to designated areas in the HSE. This led to the development of the current care group delineations. The resultant recruitment model was based on eight care group delineations broadly relating to areas of service provision, as set out in the table below. Eligibility to apply for these care groups was determined by the professional qualification as specified in the table. These delineations (outlined below) and the eligibility criteria for recruitment are the subject of this review as specified in the terms of reference.

Care Group Delineations / Post Specific Requirements

Psychology Care Group Areas		Professional Qualification for Positions in Designated Areas	
1	Disability Services – Children: • Intellectual, Physical & Sensory Disability • Early Intervention (0-5 years) • School Age (6-18 years)	Clinical	Educational
2	Disability Services – Adult: • Adult Services / Adult Intellectual Disability • Physical & Sensory	Clinical	-
3	Adult Services: • Adult Mental Health • Older Adult Mental Health (65+years)	Clinical	-
4	Adult Mental Health Intellectual Disability	Clinical	-
5	Adult Services: Primary Care / Community Care Adult Services	Clinical	Counselling
6	Child & Adolescent Mental Health: • Child & Adolescent Mental Health • Intellectual Disability	Clinical	-
7	Children, Youth & Family Services: • Child welfare & protection • Children in care / residential services • Primary Care	Clinical	-
8	Primary Care: Lifespan	Clinical	-

5. Methodology and Consultation Process

5.1 Meetings with Stakeholders

The review group issued invitations for consultations and invited written submissions from identified stakeholders in relation to items 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference.

1. To review the current recruitment care group delineations and make appropriate recommendations.
2. To review the eligibility requirements for each care group in the context of competencies for the posts and the PSI accreditation guidelines.

Consultation meetings were semi-structured[1] with a number of key questions to be addressed. Following each consultation a summary note of the discussions relevant to the Terms of Reference was prepared and provided to the stakeholders who were offered an opportunity to comment.

A listing of the stakeholders is provided on the next page.

[1]A semi-structured interview is a method of research used in the social sciences. While a structured interview has a rigorous set of questions which does not allow one to divert, a semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says.

Stakeholder Consultations:

Professional Body PSI: Council: Paul D'Alton, President; Anne Davis, President Designate. PSI Division of Clinical Psychology: Mary Davis; Aidan McKiernan; Anne Davis (Observer). PSI Division of Counselling Psychology: Ian O'Grady; Dermot O'Callaghan PSI Division of Educational Psychology: William Kinsella; Michelle Howard PSI Division of Health Psychology: Gerard Molloy; Frank Doyle	**Educators** Clinical Psychology Training Programmes: Gary O'Reilly UCD; Kiran Sharma (NUIG); Sinead Fitzgerald (TCD); Anne O'Connor (UL). Counselling Psychology Training Programme: Ladislav Timulak (TCD); Barbara Hannigan(TCD) Educational Psychology Training Programmes: William Kinsella (UCD); Siobhan O'Sullivan (UL). Masters in Health Psychology: Gerard Molloy (NUIG)
HSE Primary Care Directorate: John Hennessy, National Director. Mental Health Directorate: Anne O'Connor; National Director Jim Ryan, Assistant National Director, Head of Operations and Service Improvement Health & Wellbeing Directorate: Mary Morrissey, Psychologist, Knowledge Management - Incorporating Health Intelligence, Social Care Directorate: Assistant National Director Marion Meany; Head of Operations and Service Improvement, Disabilities Mellany McLoone, HR Manager. Health Social Care Professions Education and Development Unit, HR Directorate: Jackie Reed, General Manager, HSE Principal Psychology Managers and Psychology Teams (By Postal Consultations)	**Staff Representative Association** IMPACT Trade Union: Chris Cully; Anne Hill; Ian O'Grady. **External Expert** Professor Robert Bor - Chartered Clinical, Counselling and Health Psychologist
Government Department/Statutory Regulator: Health & Social Care Professional Council (CORU): Marianne Christensen Department of Health (Overseas Validation Unit): Geraldine Kelly; Amanda Young; Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) ** Whilst welcoming the Review the CPSA felt it would be inappropriate to attend.	

5.2 External Review

The review group contacted a number of suppliers and commissioned the preferred supplier to undertake a literature review on the learning outcomes of accredited postgraduate courses in Ireland. The preferred supplier was unable to complete the commission due to unforeseen circumstances. It was not possible within the time frame of the review to source and commission another company to undertake this literature review of learning outcomes.

5.3 Review Group Research

In order to gain a comprehensive picture and understanding of the nature of the clinical placements and their settings the Review Group sourced placement/supervised experience plans for trainees from each of the post-graduate professional psychology training programmes for the years 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015.

5.4. Survey of Principal Managers and Psychologists

All HSE psychologists were afforded the opportunity to submit their views on the current eligibility criteria and the care group delineations in line with the terms of reference. Themes from the responses received were identified and categorised using the principles of Thematic Analysis.[2]

[2]: "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in rich detail" (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

6. Consultations

6.1 Feedback from Consultations

The main themes relevant to points 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference that emerged from submissions and meetings with key stakeholders are summarised below. These themes are the most frequently mentioned issues made by the respondents:

- The review was welcomed in the context of significant organisational change and realignment in the health services. Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity to participate in the consultation process.
- Acknowledgement that recruitment matters relating to eligibility criteria are a HSE decision but important that all applicants are given the same opportunities to demonstrate their competency in the different care group areas.
- Reduction in current care group delineations.
- Current care group delineations and their accompanying specific eligibility criteria restrict movement of psychologists within the service.
- The current care group delineations prevent individuals with certain qualifications applying for given areas.
- Inadequate numbers of psychologists in the health services. Current gaps in recruitment due to the very small number of training places funded annually and difficulties in recruiting psychologists to particular care groups due to narrowness of eligibility criteria.
- Need for expansion/broadening of eligibility criteria for each care group to meet the changes in service delivery structures and diverse needs of the population.
- A range of different psychological skills needed to meet service demand, coupled with the need to have the appropriately qualified person in situ to meet the needs.
- Acknowledgement that the clinical psychology qualification has been developed to meet the needs of the Health services across all care groups. It would be progressive to have a system in place that would allow for individuals with other professional psychology qualifications to access education and experience, in a formal manner, within the health services to facilitate gaining a qualification in Clinical psychology e.g. lateral transfer mechanism.
- The pertinence of qualifications for the care group delineations was raised.
- Openness of current accredited programmes to developing their courses further to meet the clinical needs of the health services' populations.
- Need to maximise resources and flexibility to meet diverse service needs and waiting lists.

6.2 Feedback from HSE Psychologists on current Eligibility Criteria

All HSE Psychologists were afforded the opportunity to submit their views on the current eligibility criteria and the care group delineations in line with the Terms of Reference. Themes from the responses received were identified and categorised using the principles of Thematic Analysis and are summarised below. These themes are the most frequently mentioned issues made by the respondents:

Themes:

- No change in eligibility criteria
- Bias/inequity in the system
- Eligibility is a matter for the employer
- The employer should determine the skill set required for the job
- Each post should be open to all psychology disciplines
- Applications should be welcome from all psychologists who have accredited postgraduate qualifications and can demonstrate that they have the necessary competencies, experience and practice
- Post specific requirements should be established that allow those who possess particular competencies to apply for and work in the posts for which those competencies are necessary
- Core clinical components need to be established to determine competencies for all disciplines
- Care Group delineations are narrow and inflexible.

- Recruit by qualification - generating panels for each psychology discipline
- Applicants' eligibility and suitability should be assessed at interview
- Appointment criteria should allow for greater flexibility in deployment/redeployment of staff to address service needs
- Eligibility criteria should allow for appointees to develop skills on the job in order to facilitate employee development and career progression
- Level and content of some training programmes leading to a professional psychology qualification need better standardisation, including placement requirements.

6.3 External Expert: **Professor Robert Bor (Summary of Consultation)**
Professor Bor advised that historically in the United Kingdom psychologists were mainly employed in the areas of Adult Mental Health (AMH), Child Mental Health (CMH), Primary Care (PC) and Disability. In an effort to streamline recruitment, the BPS and the National Health Service (NHS) reviewed these client groups and identified competencies required for each area. This was not progressed due to professional concern that the competencies were restricted to particular disciplines of psychology and did not account for the additional skills an individual psychologist may have acquired irrespective of discipline. The current position is that all recruitment is post specific and any psychologist can apply for a given post, the objective being to recruit the most appropriate person for the job. In cases where posts are confined to particular disciplines of psychology, the rationale is clearly defined. In all cases, recruitment to fill posts is based on the needs of the population and services and not on career progression or entitlements.

In discussing training programmes for the different disciplines, Professor Bor reported that in the UK there is generally a uniformity of training and experience across clinical psychology programmes. While there may be considerable similarity between clinical and counselling programmes with regard to placement experience, counselling programmes tend to have greater latitude regarding type of placement. With the latter, recruitment needs to be cognisant of the individual counselling psychology course experiences as psychologists holding the same qualification may have quite varied training or placement experiences. His view is that there is a continuum of competencies developed rather than the disciplines having distinct skill sets.

When asked about the current care group delineation being used by the HSE when recruiting psychologists, a possible reduction in number was identified as being of potential benefit. He emphasised that what is more important is that psychologists have the competencies necessary to work in the care group areas for which they apply. Specifically with regard to psychologists being recruited to their first post, eligibility should not be solely based on the qualification obtained but also on the experiences undertaken in acquiring the qualification.

With regard to funding of training programmes, Professor Bor indicated that the National Health Service (NHS) funds clinical training only and that there are no plans for funding of training for any other group. The history of training in the UK is identical to that of Ireland where clinical psychology training developed to meet the needs of the NHS. In the 1980s counselling psychology was deemed to be more reflective and therapeutic and was not presented to the NHS as an alternative. Up to ten years ago counselling psychologists in the UK were seeking lateral transfer for clinical psychology equivalence but this is no longer the case.

7. Principles and Factors Underpinning Recommendations

These principles and factors are categorised as follows:

A. Information received from submissions, consultation meetings, and feedback from psychology profession
B. The need to ensure accessible safe high quality services
C. The need to introduce standardised eligibility criteria for recruitment of psychologists in order to address inter alia the cessation of grand-parenting, the building of internal capacity and the maximising of flexibility.
D. The eligibility criteria for care groups have been designed to best meet the service provision requirements of the HSE while being cognisant of the different professional qualifications in Psychology.

8. Review Group Recommendations

Recommendation (1):
Reduce the number of care group delineations from 8 to 4 (see 8.1 below).

Recommendation (2):
Establish five panels for the care groups listed below in 8.1.

Recommendation (3):
Revise eligibility requirements for psychology posts in the HSE to ensure that applicants have completed supervised clinical placements and post qualification supervised work experience in appropriate health settings, details of which are set out in 8.2 below and in Appendix 1.

Recommendation (4):
For unique clinical requirements for a particular client group, bespoke competitions may be conducted, see 8.4 below.

8.1 Revised Care Group Delineations for Staff and Senior Grade Psychology Posts in the HSE effective from 01.03.2016.

Care Group Areas:
1. Disability Child
2. Disability Adult
3. Adult Psychology Services (previously 3, 4 and 5)
4. Child Psychology Services (previously 6 and 7)

Panels: Five panels will be formed based on recruitment for the above four Care Group Areas: Child Disability, Adult Disability, Adult Psychology, Child Psychology and Lifespan Primary Care.

Panels	Care Group Areas	Professional Psychology Qualifications
Panel 1	Disability – Child Disability	Clinical, Counselling, Educational
Panel 2	Disability – Adult Disability	Clinical, Counselling
Panel 3	Adult Psychology Services	Clinical, Counselling
Panel 4	Child Psychology Services	Clinical, Counselling, Educational
Panel 5	Lifespan Primary Care	To be included on panel 5, applicants must be successful at interview and panelled for **both** panels 3 and 4.

8.2 Revised Eligibility Requirements for Psychology Posts in the HSE
The following sections outline revised eligibility criteria for recruitment to Staff and Senior Grade Psychology posts to the above care group areas in the HSE. These eligibility criteria require applicants to have completed supervised clinical placements and post qualification supervised work experience in appropriate health settings, details of which are outlined in Appendix 1 of this document.

8.2.1 Staff Grade Posts:

Eligibility Requirements for Staff Grade Posts up to 30.09.18

Applicants must have a recognised university degree or diploma (QQ1 level 8 equivalent) obtained with 1st or 2nd class honours in which Psychology was taken as a major subject and honours obtained in that subject AND a recognised professional post-graduate qualification in clinical, counselling or educational psychology or an equivalent qualification validated by the Department of Health.

AND

Applicants with a clinical or counselling psychology qualification must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings, for the areas for which they wish to apply - Disability (Child and Adult), Child Psychology, Adult Psychology - either at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist.

OR

Applicants with an educational psychology qualification must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings for the areas for which they wish to apply - Child Disability, Child Psychology - either at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist.

The above eligibility criteria apply without prejudice to applicants employed in a post of Basic Grade Psychologist or above in the Irish public health service at October 2002.

Note: Combinations of supervised clinical placement experience as part of the qualification and post qualification supervised work experience within a single care group area to give a total of 60 days are not acceptable.

8.2.2 Staff Grade Posts:

Eligibility Requirements for Staff Grade Posts from 01.10.18.

Applicants must have a recognised university degree or diploma (QQ1 level 8 equivalent) obtained with 1st or 2nd class honours in which Psychology was taken as a major subject and honours obtained in that subject AND a recognised professional post-graduate qualification in clinical, counselling or educational psychology or an equivalent qualification validated by the Department of Health.

AND

Clinical or Counselling Psychology Qualifications awarded on or before 30.09.2018 Applicants must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings in each of the areas of Disability (Child and Adult), Child Psychology, Adult Psychology, at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist or a combination of both.

OR

Educational Psychology Qualifications awarded on or before 30.09.2018

Applicants must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings in each of the areas of Child Disability and Child Psychology, at least 60 days or equivalent in supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist or a combination of both.

Note: Combinations of supervised clinical placement experience as part of the qualification and post qualification supervised work experience within a single care group area to give a total of 60 days are not acceptable.

OR

Clinical or Counselling Psychology Qualifications awarded on or after 01.10.2018 Applicants with a clinical or counselling psychology qualification must demonstrate that they have acquired at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements in appropriate health settings in each of the three areas of Disability (Child and Adult), Child Psychology and Adult Psychology as part of the post-graduate professional qualification.

OR

Educational Psychology Qualifications awarded on or after 01.10.2018

Applicants must demonstrate that they have acquired at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements in appropriate health settings in both areas of Child Disability and Child Psychology as part of the post-graduate professional qualification.

The above eligibility criteria apply without prejudice to applicants employed in a post of Basic Grade Psychologist or above in the Irish public health service at October 2002.

8.2.3 Senior Grade Posts:

Eligibility Requirements for Senior Grade Posts up to 30.09.18

Applicants must have a recognised university degree or diploma (QQ1 level 8 equivalent) obtained with 1st or 2nd class honours in which Psychology was taken as a major subject and honours obtained in that subject AND a recognised post-graduate professional qualification in clinical, counselling or educational psychology or an equivalent qualification validated by the Department of Health.

AND

Applicants must have at least five years satisfactory post-graduate experience in the area of professional psychology, no more than three years of which was spent in gaining the post-graduate professional qualification and no less than two years full-time spent in post qualification experience as a professional psychologist. Years in excess of the permitted three years for completion of the post-graduate training or time not worked will not be taken into consideration when assessing the five years experience requirement.

AND

Applicants with a clinical or counselling psychology qualification must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings, for the areas for which they wish to apply – Disability (Child and Adult), Child Psychology, Adult Psychology either at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist.

OR

Applicants with an educational psychology qualification must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings for the areas for which they wish to apply - Child Disability, Child Psychology either at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist.

The above eligibility criteria apply without prejudice to applicants employed in a post of Basic Grade Psychologist or above in the Irish public health service at October 2002.

Note: Combinations of supervised clinical placement experience as part of the qualification and post qualification supervised work experience within a single care group area to give a total of 60 days are not acceptable.

8.2.4 Senior Grade Posts:

Eligibility Requirements for Senior Grade Posts from 01.10.2018

Applicants must have a recognised university degree or diploma (QQ1 level 8 equivalent) obtained with 1st or 2nd class honours in which Psychology was taken as a major subject and honours obtained in that subject AND a recognised post-graduate professional qualification in clinical, counselling or educational psychology or an equivalent qualification validated by the Department of Health.

AND

Applicants must have at least five years satisfactory post-graduate experience in the area of professional psychology, no more than three years of which was spent in gaining the post-graduate professional qualification and no less than two years full-time spent in post qualification experience as a professional psychologist. Years in excess of the permitted three years for completion of the post-graduate training or time not worked will not be taken into consideration when assessing the five years experience requirement.

AND

Clinical or Counselling psychology qualifications awarded on or before 30.09.2018 Applicants must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings in each of the areas of Disability (Child and Adult), Child Psychology, Adult Psychology; at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist or a combination of both.

OR

Educational psychology qualifications awarded on or before 30.09.2018

Applicants must demonstrate that they have acquired in appropriate health settings in each of the areas of Child Disability and Child Psychology; at least 60 days or equivalent in supervised clinical placements as part of the professional qualification or at least 60 days or equivalent post qualification supervised work experience as a psychologist or a combination of both.

Note: Combinations of supervised clinical placement experience as part of the qualification and post qualification supervised work experience within a single care group area to give a total of 60 days are not acceptable.

OR

Clinical or Counselling Psychology Qualifications awarded on or after 01.10.2018 Applicants with a clinical or counselling psychology qualification must demonstrate that they have acquired at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements in appropriate health settings in each of the three areas of Disability (Child and Adult), Child Psychology and Adult Psychology as part of the post-graduate professional qualification.

OR

Educational Psychology Qualifications awarded on or after 01.10.2018

Applicants must demonstrate that they have acquired at least 60 days or equivalent supervised clinical placements in appropriate health settings in both areas of Child Disability and Child Psychology as part of the post-graduate professional qualification.

The above eligibility criteria apply without prejudice to applicants employed in a post of Basic Grade Psychologist or above in the Irish public health service at October 2002

8.3 Facilitating Psychologists to meet future requirements

From 01.10.2018 HSE psychology employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria applying from that date will not be eligible to compete for posts until they meet the eligibility criteria.

These employees should be facilitated in accessing opportunities to acquire the necessary supervised work experiences within the Irish health services in order to meet the revised eligibility requirements.

8.4 Bespoke Competitions

The Review Group recommends that for unique clinical requirements for a particular client group, bespoke competitions may be conducted.

8.5 Health Psychologists

As part of the consultation process the Review Group met with representatives of the Health Psychology Division within PSI and the Director of the PSI accredited NUIG Health Psychology academic postgraduate course. Since there is no programme currently operating in Ireland which qualifies individuals to work as professional health psychologists, the Review Group did not include health psychology graduates among the disciplines considered for employment as professional psychologists within the recommended care group areas.

Professor Bor stated that while he could see a role for health psychologists in specific areas such as smoking cessation or obesity prevention in Primary Care, he did not see them as having the competencies to work in the Care Group delineations specified for recruitment of psychologists.

The Review Group however acknowledges the important role which health psychologists could play within the Irish health service and would welcome the establishment of a professional post graduate health psychology qualification.

8.5.1 Health Psychology Recommendation

The review group recommends that a working group be established to further identify possible roles within the Health & Wellbeing and Acute Hospitals Divisions where the competencies of health psychologists can bring added value to the service provision in these areas.

9. Conclusion

The Review Group would like to express their sincere thanks to all stakeholders who participated in, and contributed to the review process. The contributions provided by all participants were taken into account and are reflected in the recommendations.

The Review Group believes that the recommendations when implemented will contribute to addressing service needs within the HSE. The Review Group is happy to provide assistance and support to the implementation phase of the recommendations.

10. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Definitions

For the purpose of clarity the following definitions apply in the context of recruitment for psychology positions within the HSE:

- **PSI Placement Accreditation Standards:**
  Clinical Psychology: Each trainee should spend a minimum of 60 days per placement but overall, trainees should be on placement for a minimum of 390 days of the total course time.
  Counselling Psychology: Trainees should have a minimum of 450 hours supervised client contact experience (accrued over a minimum period of 30 months based on at least 2 placement days per week). Students must gain client experience in at least three settings at least one of which should be in a health care setting.
  Educational Psychology: Trainees should complete 120 full days practical work experience in applied settings.

- **Appropriate Health Setting**
  An appropriate health setting is defined in this context to be a setting which facilitates placement/clinical experience to be gained where the trainees / students have the opportunity to be supervised by an appropriate supervisor who is working within the health setting. The placement should include opportunities to acquire skills in assessment, formulation, intervention, evaluation and reporting with a range of clinical problems in terms of complexity and severity seen within a care group population e.g. Child (0-18) Adult, Disability (lifespan).

  Statutory / Public health service setting outside of the Irish State will be considered on a case by case basis.

- **Post-graduate professional psychology qualification**
  Post Graduate qualification means satisfactory completion of a PSI accredited professional training programme in clinical, counselling or educational psychology. Applicants with non Irish post graduate qualifications must have their qualification validated by the Department of Health.

- **Supervised Placement:**
  A common definition of supervised clinical placement was developed based on the diverse accreditation standards pertaining to each qualification. This is defined as a period of clinical time spent under the supervision of an appropriately qualified senior psychologist. The placement must provide the opportunity to work with a range of clinical problems in terms of complexity and severity.
  To meet the eligibility criteria for psychology posts in the HSE all applicants must demonstrate that they have completed a placement of at least 60 days in a health setting supervised by a practitioner who fulfils PSI supervision accreditation criteria for the professional qualification in question. Counselling psychologists currently calculate placements using both days and hours. In their case, the 60 days in a health setting must comprise a minimum of 150 hours of direct client contact.

- **Post-qualification:**
  Post Qualification is defined as time in supervised professional practice after acquiring a professional qualification in clinical, counselling or educational psychology.

- **Appropriate post qualification professional work experience:**
  Sixty days or equivalent (60 days equates to 150 hours of supervised client contact) of clinical experience under the supervision of a more senior grade psychologist (relevant discipline of psychology applies).

APPENDIX 2: Documentation

Professional Associations:

- The Psychological Society of Ireland Accreditation Criteria for Postgraduate professional training in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology.
- The Psychological Society of Ireland Statement on the Recruitment of Professional Psychologists.

Educators:

- Trinity College Dublin – Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology: Course Outline 2014-2015
- Trinity College Dublin - Doctoral programme in Clinical Psychology Course Handbook 2014-2015
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- National University of Ireland, Galway – MSc in Health Psychology, 2014-2015, Student Guide
- Queens University Belfast - Doctoral Programme in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP) Programme Handbook, 2014 -2015
- Queens University Belfast - Doctoral Programme in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP) Section B: The Programme
- Queens University Belfast - Doctoral Programme in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP): Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Children and Adolescent, Record of Achievement, June 2014
- Feedback from all PSI accredited programmes detailing the placement type, placement duration, and supervision arrangements of each graduate from the programmes from identified cohorts.

HSE:

- Feedback from Psychology Managers and Psychology Staff working within the HSE in relation to the current eligibility criteria and care group delineations used for the recruitment of psychologists to the HSE.

APPENDIX 3: PSI Accredited Post-Graduate Professional Programmes

College	Programme
NUI Galway	M.Sc. in Health Psychology
NUI Galway	D. Psych. Sc. in Clinical Psychology
University of Limerick	M.Sc. Work & Organisational Psychology
University of Limerick	M.A. in Psychology
University of Limerick	D. Clin. Psychology
Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick	M.A. in Educational Psychology
Trinity College Dublin	Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology
Trinity College Dublin	D. Clin. Psychology
University College Dublin	D. Psych. Sc. In Clinical Psychology
University College Dublin	M.A. Education Psychology
Dublin City University	M.Sc. Work and Organisational Psychology

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