

Andrew O'Shaughnessy,

202 Navan Road,

Dublin 7.

08/11/2016.

Public Consultation,

Professional Regulation Unit,

Department of Health,

Hawkins House,

Dublin 2,

D02 VW90.

1. Whether the professions of counsellor and/or psychotherapist ought to be subject to State regulation.

The Profession of counsellor/ psychotherapist should definitely be the subject of state regulation including any registered professional organisations representing the profession. There is a lot of confusion within the psychotherapy profession as a consequence of the existence of 25 professional representative organisations. Many of these organisations were established as a result of personality clashes among members of the larger organisations, educational and theoretical bias and because of disagreements around accredited courses not having QQI or equivalent recognition.

2. If so, whether the professions ought to be regulated under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 or otherwise.

The psychotherapy profession is complementary to and an integral aspect of the overall Health and Social Care Services and should be regulated under the Health and Social Care Act 2005.

3. If the professions are to be regulated under the 2005 Act whether it would be appropriate to regulate one or two professions under one registration board.

There is no evidence to suggest that Counselling and Psychotherapy are separate professions. Both are titles under the umbrella of the “Psychological Therapies”. Sylvie and Schapira (2000) describe counselling and psychotherapy as work that assists an individual or groups ability to develop a psychological awareness so that a client can make sense of the things that trouble them. With the psychological therapist’s assistance, a client’s emotional resilience and resources are developed and maintained. Both counsellors and psychotherapists use skills to facilitate changes that help clients deal more effectively with problems in their lives. Ultimately, this enables clients to live more satisfying lives.

4. The appropriate level of “grand parenting” qualifications to be set for existing practitioners having regard to the QQI Awards standards.

Grand parenting qualifications should ensure that participants learn the skills of research, analysis, Clinical assessment diagnosis and evaluation and communication. They will also be able to apply these skills within and to professional and organisational contexts. These skills, and the knowledge, understanding and values which underpin all relevant theoretical approaches’ will be explicitly connected, rather than being presented in isolation from each other. The grand parenting qualifications may be obtained over a minimum one year and/or maximum five year period by undertaking a maximum of six modules to be determined by the special advisory committee within the regulatory structure.

5. The appropriate level of qualifications to be set for future applicants for registration having regard to the QQI Awards standards.

The minimum standard of qualification for future applicants should be at NFQ Level 8 or its equivalent.

6. The title or titles that ought to be protected for the exclusive use of registrants.

The Titles to be protected should be under the umbrella of the ‘Psychological Therapies’ as One Title ‘Psychotherapist’ to include ‘Counselling’ of a Psychotherapeutic Nature and Counselling Psychology.

Signed:

Andrew O’Shaughnessy.

BA (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy.

References:

Schapira.S.K. (2000). Choosing a Counselling or Psychotherapy Training:
A Practical Guide. . Routledge. London. PP. 17