

**Counsellor/Therapist (National Counselling Service)**

**Job Specification & Terms and Conditions**

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| **Job Title, Grade Code** | Counsellor/Therapist (National Counselling Service)  (Grade Code: 3028) |
| **Remuneration** | The salary scale for the post is: (01/10/2024)  €52,110 - €54,897 - €57,665 - €60,834 - €64,006 - €67,175 - €70,347 - €73,516 - €76,684 - €79,856 - €81,793 - €84,999 - €88,205 - €91,403  **The application of incremental credit for Counsellor/Therapist roles**  The role of a Counsellor and a Counsellor/Therapist in the National Counselling Service share some duties and responsibilities, however they differ with regard to specific aspects of the NCS Counsellor/Therapist role including: the range and type of assessments conducted; the scope of the role which requires counsellors to work with clients with varied levels of complexity including childhood abuse, traumatic experiences.  In addition, a Counsellor/Therapist in the National Counselling Service may also have responsibility for case management supervision of other counsellor/therapists such as agency counsellors.  While certain experience e.g. as a Counsellor in a university setting, counsellor working in addiction, entitles a candidate to be eligible for interview for the role of Counsellor/Therapist in the NCS, the roles and responsibilities of the Counsellor would not be equivalent to that of a Counsellor/Therapist, NCS in order for incremental credit to be applied.  If a candidate has previous public service as a Counsellor/Therapist working with the NCS, either directly employed in the HSE or employed through agency in the HSE, this service can be considered once it has been verified and reviewed at the contracting stage of the recruitment process.  If not verified, candidates will commence on the first point of the Counsellor/Therapist salary scale.  Salary Scales are updated periodically and the most up to date versions can be found here: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/pay/pay-scales.html> |
| **Campaign Reference** | NRS14639 |
| **Closing Date** | Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 12 noon |
| **Proposed Interview Date (s)** | Week Commencing 12th May 2025  Candidates will normally be given at least two weeks' notice of interview. The timescale may be reduced in exceptional circumstances. |
| **Taking up Appointment** | A start date will be indicated at job offer stage. |
| **Location of Post** | Individual sites / location will be indicated at expression of interest stage to panel members for each individual job.  Counsellor / Therapist job opportunities will occur primarily within the HSE National Counselling Service based within the Community Health Organisations across the HSE nationwide.  A separate panel may be formed for each of the RHA’s as a result of this campaign for Counsellor/Therapist (National Counselling Service) from which current and future, permanent and specified purpose vacancies of full or part-time duration may be filled. |
| **Informal Enquiries** | **NCS Contact Details**  **HSE Dublin and North East**  HSE Dublin and North East provides health and social care to North Dublin, Louth, Meath, Monaghan and most areas of Cavan.   * Director of Counselling Fiona Ward; Email: [Fiona.ward@hse.ie](mailto:Fiona.ward@hse.ie)   **HSE Dublin and Midlands**  HSE Dublin and Midlands provides health and social care services to Dublin South City and West and Dublin South West, Kildare, West Wicklow, Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath.  Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare,   * Director of Counselling Niamh Mac Donagh; Email: [Niamh.macdonagh@hse.ie](mailto:Niamh.macdonagh@hse.ie)   Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath   * Director of Counselling Pauline Butler; Email: [Pauline.butler@hse.ie](mailto:Pauline.butler@hse.ie)   **HSE Dublin and South East**  HSE Dublin and South-East provides health and social care services to South-East Dublin, Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford and most areas of Wicklow.  South Dublin, South East Dublin, East Wicklow   * Director of Counselling, Derek McNamara; Email: [Derek.Mcnamara@hse.ie](mailto:Derek.Mcnamara@hse.ie)   Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow, South Tipperary   * Director of Counselling Vacant; Email:   **HSE West and North West**  HSE West and North West provides health and social care to Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, West Cavan, Mayo, Galway and Roscommon.  Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim   * Director of Counselling: Tom McGrath email: [Tom.Mcgrath@hse.ie](mailto:Tom.Mcgrath@hse.ie)   Galway, Mayo, Roscommon   * Director of Counselling: Mary Kilcommins-Greene; Email: [mary.kilcomminsGreene@hse.ie](mailto:mary.kilcomminsGreene@hse.ie)   **HSE Mid West**  HSE Mid West provides health and social care services to Clare, Limerick, and North Tipperary   * Interim Director of Counselling Doreen Morgan; Email: [Doreen.morgan@hse.ie](mailto:Doreen.morgan@hse.ie)   **HSE South West**  HSE South West provides health and social care services to Cork and Kerry.   * Director of Counselling Margaret O Mahony; Email: [Margaretm.omahony@hse.ie](mailto:Margaretm.omahony@hse.ie) |
| **Details of Service** | The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) provides a professional, confidential, counselling and psychotherapy service. It is available in all HSE Community Health Organisations (CHO) areas and operates from over 240 locations throughout Ireland.  The aim of the NCS is to support clients to improve their quality of life and reduce their psychological distress through the provision of evidence-based, professional, client centred counselling.  The quantum of services provided by the NCS include provision of counselling to adults who have experienced childhood abuse, former residents of Mother and Baby Homes, individuals effected by issues in the cervical check screening programme, clients experiencing suicidal ideation/self-harm, bereavement, as well as the Counselling in Primary Care service (CIPC).  CIPC provides time limited counselling of up to 8 counselling sessions to adult General Medical Services (GMS) cardholders with mild to moderate psychological difficulties. Eligibility criteria for the service currently limit referrals to CIPC to patients holding valid GMS cards referred by their GP or Primary Care Practitioner. The CIPC model of service is aimed at providing early access to counselling.  The (CaPA) service (for adults who have experienced childhood abuse) is for moderate to severe psychological difficulties and offers medium to long term counselling contracts.  In 2021 the NCS began offering counselling to former residents of Mother and Baby Home Institutions as part of the Government agreed package of health and well-being measures.  The NCS fosters a client-centred holistic model of care based on best practice therapeutic models of clinical intervention both individual and group.  The NCS model of service includes provision of a comprehensive assessment of clients and different levels of counselling intervention depending on the nature and complexity of clients’ presenting issues. The HSE NCS provides short, medium and long term therapy contracts to clients presenting with mild, moderate and complex psychological difficulties.  More information about the NCS can be obtained from: www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental\_Health\_Services/National\_Counselling\_Service/  www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental\_Health\_Services/counsellingpc/ |
| **Reporting Relationship** | The line management reporting relationship of the counsellor/therapist will be to the Senior Counsellor/Therapist or designate. |
| **Key Working Relationships** | The NCS Counsellor/therapist provides counselling and psychotherapy to adults in line with service policy and practice. Within the service key working relationships are with administrative staff, counsellor/therapist colleagues, senior counsellor/therapists, the Director of Counselling.  The counsellor/therapist is expected to engage as appropriate with a wide range of stakeholders with whom strong professional relationships need to be forged and fostered on an ongoing basis. Key stakeholders include:   * Service users * GPs * Members of community mental health teams * Members of community health networks and primary care staff * Statutory and community partners |
| **Purpose of the Post** | To provide counselling and psychotherapy to clients of the NCS within established NCS and HSE standards and policies, legislative, statutory and regulatory frameworks  To work as part of a team and within their limits of professional competence to deliver a safe, effective and high quality counselling service |
| **Principal Duties and Responsibilities** | *The Counsellor / Therapist will:*  **Professional/Clinical**   * Be responsible for the delivery of counselling and psychotherapy services appropriate to the post in line with best practice. * Work within limits of professional competence in line with principles of best practice professional conduct and clinical governance. * Work in an ethical and professional manner at all times. * Conduct assessments and individual and / or group counselling / psychotherapy with clients of the service. * Establish appropriate counselling / psychotherapy contracts with clients * Formulate and implement plans for therapeutic intervention based on an appropriate conceptual framework. * Provide a counselling / psychotherapy service across the geographical work area as required. * Maintain assigned clinical caseload. * Carry out psycho-educational and mental health promotion activities as appropriate. * Inform, facilitate and refer clients, as appropriate, on accessing healthcare and support services. * Inform clients about legal and psycho-social implications of attending the National Counselling Service. * Promptly bring clinical governance issues such as risk, child protection etc. to the attention of the Senior Counsellor/Therapist or designate, as appropriate. * Provide case management supervision, if required. * Engage in clinical audit, quality initiatives and service research and evaluation. * Attend meetings /case-conferences as required. * Participate in service related working groups / sub-groups as required. * Work as a member of an integrated team - communicate effectively and work in co-operation with other team members and agencies to ensure integrated service provision. * Utilise evidence-based literature and research to support effective practice. * Participate in evaluation of clinical activity and provide such information as required by the Senior Counsellor/Therapist/designate for the purpose of service monitoring and evaluation. * Operate within the scope of Counsellor and Psychotherapy practice as per relevant requirements of current accrediting body (CORU when the register is live). * Work in accordance with the principles and values of recovery as described in the National Framework for Recovery for Irish Mental Health Services 2018-2020. * Foster an understanding of the role and contribution of counselling and psychotherapy by providing professional consultation, education, guidance and support to others as appropriate. * Contribute to, promote and safeguard the good reputation of the service. * Promote a culture that values equality, diversity and respect in the workplace. * Keep Line Manager fully informed and up-to-date on all significant matters. * Deputise for Line Manager as agreed / appropriate.   **Education & Training**   * Attend mandatory training programmes. * Engage in reflective practice and regular clinical and managerial supervision with the Senior Counsellor/Therapist or designate. * Engage in regular external clinical supervision in accordance with NCS Policy. * Actively participate in peer supervision with Counsellor /Therapist colleagues * Stay informed and up to date regarding advances in professional knowledge and practice and developments in national policies, strategies and legislation and perceived impact on practice. * Take responsibility for continuous professional development and ensure compliance with statutory registration requirements. * Engage in the HSE performance achievement process in conjunction with your Line Manager and staff as appropriate. * Engage in career and professional development planning. * To participate in the practice education of student therapists * Act as a resource by participating in the induction, education and training of other counsellor/therapists, trainee counsellor/therapists as appropriate.   **Quality and Risk, Health and Safety Management**   * Comply with and contribute to the development of policies, procedures and safe professional practice and adhere to relevant legislation, regulations and standards. * Adequately identify, assess, manage and monitor risks within their area of responsibility. * Have a working knowledge of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Standards as they apply to the role for example, Standards for Healthcare, National Standards for the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections, Hygiene Standards etc.and comply with associated HSE protocols for implementing and maintaining these standards as appropriate to the role. * Support, promote and actively participate in sustainable energy, water and waste initiatives to create a more sustainable, ow carbon and efficient health service. * Develop awareness of and comply with the HSE Incident Management Framework and the HSE Enterprise Risk Management Policy.   **Management & Administration**   * Maintain accurate, up to date service user records and files as required appropriate in accordance with HSE requirements and local guidelines, Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Acts (GDPR) and other relevant legislation. * Maintain service statistics and other activity data as required. * Maintain professional standards with regard to service user and data confidentiality. * Contribute to policy development, performance monitoring and budgetary control of service in conjunction with the Senior Counsellor/therapist and relevant others. * Contribute to the development and implementation of information sharing protocols, audit systems, referral pathways and integrated care arrangements. * Prepare reports, provide statistical returns and additional data as required to support the effective administration and evaluation of the service. * Participate in clinical administration duties, as required. * Actively participate in development and continuing improvement initiatives of the service in liaison with the Senior Counsellor/Therapist /relevant others. * Contribute to policy development, performance monitoring, business proposals and service planning in conjunction with the Senior Counsellor/Therapist / relevant others. * Ensure compliance with HSE National Financial Regulations. * Assist in ensuring that the service makes the most efficient and effective use of developments in Information and Communications Technology. * Act as spokesperson for the Organisation as required. * Demonstrate pro-active commitment to all communications with internal and external stakeholders. * Keep up to date with organisational developments within the HSE.   **The above Job Specification is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all duties involved and consequently, the post holder may be required to perform other** |
| **Eligibility Criteria**  **Qualifications and/ or experience** | 1. Statutory Registration, Professional Qualifications, Experience, etc.   (a) Eligible applicants will be those who on the closing date for the competition:   1. Hold a qualification at Level 7 or higher on the QQI framework in a human science discipline (medical, psychological, social, educational) or hold a qualification at Level 7 or higher in a health and social care profession.   **PLUS 2A OR 2B**  **(2) A (i)** Hold a degree or post-graduate qualification in counselling, or psychotherapy recognised by one of the following, as appropriate:, the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), or one of the five sections within the Irish Council for Psychotherapy (ICP)  And  **(2) A (ii)** Have full accredited membership with one of the following: IACP or one of the five sections within ICP. Pre-accredited hours must include a minimum of 100 hours of one to one counselling/psychotherapy with adult clients under the supervision of an IACP / ICP accredited supervisor.  **Or**  **(2) B (i)** Are a full member of the Clinical or Counselling Psychology Division of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI).  **Health**  A candidate for and any person holding the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.  **Character**  Each candidate for and any person holding the office must be of good character. |
| **Post Specific Requirements** | Post specific requirement for individual posts will be indicated at the ‘Expression of Interest’ stage of the recruitment process |
| **Other requirements specific to the post** | * Have access to appropriate transport to fulfil the requirements of the role * Sufficient IT skills to carry out the role of counsellor/therapist effectively * Flexible working hours – availability to work outside of office hours, subject to service needs, in order to support service accessibility to clients |
| **Skills, competencies and/or knowledge** | Analysis, Problem Solving & Decision Making Skills   * Demonstrate the ability to evaluate information and make effective decisions   Building & Maintaining Relationships (including Team Skills & Leadership potential)   * Demonstrate effective team skills * Demonstrate ability to utilise supervision effectively * Demonstrate flexibility and openness to change * Demonstrate resilience and composure   Knowledge / Experience Relevant to the Role   * Demonstrate competence in provision of: comprehensive assessment of clients; short medium and long term counselling interventions appropriate to a range of client needs and complexity of presenting issues (mild, moderate and complex psychological difficulties) * Demonstrate sufficient professional / clinical knowledge to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the role * Demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge to best practice * Demonstrate competence in delivering a professional service * Demonstrate a willingness to develop Information and Communications Technology skills relevant to the role * Demonstrate commitment to continuing professional development * Demonstrate an awareness of the organisation of the HSE   Organisation & Management Skills   * Demonstrate the ability to manage self in a busy working environment * Demonstrate the ability to plan and deliver counselling/psychotherapy in an effective and resourceful manner * Demonstrate initiative and innovation in the delivery of service * Demonstrate a commitment to providing a quality service   Communication & Interpersonal Skills   * Display effective interpersonal skills including the ability to collaborate with colleagues, etc. * Display dignity and respect at all times in dealing with clients |
| **Campaign Specific Selection Process**  **Ranking/Shortlisting / Interview** | A ranking and or shortlisting exercise may be carried out on the basis of information supplied in your application form. The criteria for ranking and or shortlisting are based on the requirements of the post as outlined in the eligibility criteria and skills, competencies and/or knowledge section of this job specification. Therefore it is very important that you think about your experience in light of those requirements.  Failure to include information regarding these requirements may result in you not being called forward to the next stage of the selection process.  Those successful at the ranking stage of this process (where applied) will be placed on an order of merit and will be called to interview in ‘bands’ depending on the service needs of the organisation. |
| **Diversity, Equality and Inclusion** | The HSE is an equal opportunities employer.  Employees of the HSE bring a range of skills, talents, diverse thinking and experience to the organisation. The HSE believes passionately that employing a diverse workforce is central to its success – we aim to develop the workforce of the HSE so that it reflects the diversity of HSE service users and to strengthen it through accommodating and valuing different perspectives. Ultimately this will result in improved service user and employee experience.  The HSE is committed to creating a positive working environment whereby all employees inclusive of age, civil status, disability, ethnicity and race, family status, gender, membership of the Traveller community, religion and sexual orientation are respected, valued and can reach their full potential. The HSE aims to achieve this through development of an organisational culture where injustice, bias and discrimination are not tolerated.  The HSE welcomes people with diverse backgrounds and offers a range of supports and resources to staff, such as those who require a reasonable accommodation at work because of a disability or long term health condition.  For further information on the HSE commitment to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, please visit the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion web page at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/diversity/> |
| **Code of Practice** | The Health Service Executive will run this campaign in compliance with the Code of Practice prepared by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA).  The CPSA is responsible for establishing the principles that should be followed when making an appointment. These are set out in the CPSA Code of Practice. The Code outlines the standards that should be adhered to at each stage of the selection process and sets out the review and appeal mechanisms open to candidates should they be unhappy with a selection process.  The CPSA Code of Practice can be accessed via <https://www.cpsa.ie/>. |
| The reform programme outlined for the Health Services may impact on this role and as structures change the Job Specification may be reviewed.  This Job Specification is a guide to the general range of duties assigned to the post holder. It is intended to be neither definitive nor restrictive and is subject to periodic review with the employee concerned. | |

**Counsellor/Therapist (National Counselling Service)**

**Terms and Conditions of Employment**

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| **Tenure** | The posts are pensionable. A panel may be created from which permanent and specified purpose vacancies of full or part time duration may be filled. The tenure of these posts will be indicated at “expression of interest” stage.  Appointment as an employee of the Health Service Executive is governed by the Health Act 2004 and the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 and Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Amendment Act 2013. |
| **Remuneration** | The Salary scale for the post is: (01/10/2024)  €52,110 - €54,897 - €57,665 - €60,834 - €64,006 - €67,175 - €70,347 - €73,516 - €76,684 - €79,856 - €81,793 - €84,999 - €88,205 - €91,403  **The application of incremental credit for Counsellor/Therapist roles**  The role of a Counsellor and a Counsellor/Therapist in the National Counselling Service share some duties and responsibilities, however they differ with regard to specific aspects of the NCS Counsellor/Therapist role including: the range and type of assessments conducted; the scope of the role which requires counsellors to work with clients with varied levels of complexity including childhood abuse, traumatic experiences.  In addition, a Counsellor/Therapist in the National Counselling Service may also have responsibility for case management supervision of other counsellor/therapists such as agency counsellors.  While certain experience e.g. as a Counsellor in a university setting, counsellor working in addiction, entitles a candidate to be eligible for interview for the role of Counsellor/Therapist in the NCS, the roles and responsibilities of the Counsellor would not be equivalent to that of a Counsellor/Therapist, NCS in order for incremental credit to be applied.  If a candidate has previous public service as a Counsellor/Therapist working with the NCS, either directly employed in the HSE or employed through agency in the HSE, this service can be considered once it has been verified and reviewed at the contracting stage of the recruitment process.  If not verified, candidates will commence on the first point of the Counsellor/Therapist salary scale.  Salary Scales are updated periodically and the most up to date versions can be found here: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/pay/pay-scales.html> |
| **Working Week** | The standard working week applying to the post is to be confirmed at Job Offer stage.  HSE Circular 003-2009 “Matching Working Patterns to Service Needs (Extended Working Day / Week Arrangements); Framework for Implementation of Clause 30.4 of Towards 2016” applies. Under the terms of this circular, all new entrants and staff appointed to promotional posts from Dec 16th, 2008 will be required to work agreed roster / on call arrangements as advised by their line manager. Contracted hours of work are liable to change between the hours of 8am-8pm over seven days to meet the requirements for extended day services in accordance with the terms of the Framework Agreement (Implementation of Clause 30.4 of Towards 2016). |
| **Annual Leave** | The annual leave associated with the post will be confirmed at Contracting stage. |
| **Superannuation** | This is a pensionable position with the HSE. The successful candidate will upon appointment become a member of the appropriate pension scheme. Pension scheme membership will be notified within the contract of employment. Members of pre-existing pension schemes who transferred to the HSE on the 01st January 2005 pursuant to Section 60 of the Health Act 2004 are entitled to superannuation benefit terms under the HSE Scheme which are no less favourable to those which they were entitled to at 31st December 2004 |
| **Age** | The Public Service Superannuation (Age of Retirement) Act, 2018\* set 70 years as the compulsory retirement age for public servants.  ***\* Public Servants not affected by this legislation:***  Public servants joining the public service or re-joining the public service with a 26 week break in service, between 1 April 2004 and 31 December 2012 (new entrants) have no compulsory retirement age.  Public servants, joining the public service or re-joining the public service after a 26 week break, after 1 January 2013 are members of the Single Pension Scheme and have a compulsory retirement age of 70. |
| **Probation** | Every appointment of a person who is not already a permanent officer of the Health Service Executive or of a Local Authority shall be subject to a probationary period of 12 months as stipulated in the Department of Health Circular No.10/71. |
| **Protection of Children Guidance and Legislation** | The welfare and protection of children is the responsibility of all HSE staff. You must be aware of and understand your specific responsibilities under the Children First Act 2015, the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 in accordance with Section 2, Children First National Guidance and other relevant child safeguarding legislation and policies.  Some staff have additional responsibilities such as Line Managers, Designated Officers and Mandated Persons. You should check if you are a Designated Officer and / or a Mandated Person and be familiar with the related roles and legal responsibilities.  For further information, guidance and resources please visit: [HSE Children First webpage](https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/childrenfirst/resources/). |
| **Infection Control** | Have a working knowledge of Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Standards as they apply to the role for example, Standards for Healthcare, National Standards for the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections, Hygiene Standards etc. and comply with associated HSE protocols for implementing and maintaining these standards as appropriate to the role. |
| **Health & Safety** | It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that the management of safety, health and welfare is successfully integrated into all activities undertaken within their area of responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable. Line managers are named and roles and responsibilities detailed in the relevant Site Specific Safety Statement (SSSS).  Key responsibilities include:   * Developing a SSSS for the department/service[[1]](#footnote-1), as applicable, based on the identification of hazards and the assessment of risks, and reviewing/updating same on a regular basis (at least annually) and in the event of any significant change in the work activity or place of work. * Ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is integrated into day-to-day business, providing Systems Of Work (SOW) that are planned, organised, performed, maintained, and revised as appropriate, and ensuring that all safety related records are maintained and available for inspection. * Consulting and communicating with staff and safety representatives on OSH matters. * Ensuring a training needs assessment (TNA) is undertaken for employees, facilitating their attendance at statutory OSH training, and ensuring records are maintained for each employee. * Ensuring that all incidents occurring within the relevant department/service are appropriately managed and investigated in accordance with HSE procedures[[2]](#footnote-2). * Seeking advice from health and safety professionals through the National Health and Safety Function Helpdesk as appropriate. * Reviewing the health and safety performance of the ward/department/service and staff through, respectively, local audit and performance achievement meetings for example.   **Note**: Detailed roles and responsibilities of Line Managers are outlined in local SSSS. |

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)