

JOB DETAILS

Title:	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Lead
Duration:	One year with likely extension
Job Family:	Programme Manager
Salary:	€ 52,410.79 - €66,037.60 ¹
Working hours:	35 hours per week
Location:	Irish Red Cross Head Office, 16 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
Reporting to:	Head of National Services

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Irish Red Cross Society (IRC) is part of the world's largest independent humanitarian network, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The IRC is committed to and bound by its Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality. The vision of the Irish Red Cross is to be a leading humanitarian organisation, providing impartial services and support to vulnerable communities at home and abroad. Our mission is to identify and deliver humanitarian assistance to those most in need

Since its formation in 1939 the Irish Red Cross has provided medical aid and emergency support in accordance with the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It is specifically involved in first aid training, ambulance services, and community support across Ireland. The IRC became involved in provision of **Psychological** First Aid (PFA) in 2019 as basic step to a broader recognition that mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) are essential components of humanitarian response. Since then, over 800 of the 4000 IRC members have completed training in PFA.

As part of the humanitarian response to the war in Ukraine the IRC joined 28 National Red Cross Societies across Europe to implement the EU4 Health Programme "Provision of quality and timely psychological first aid to people affected by the Ukraine crisis in impacted countries" supported by the European Commission. During 2024-2025, this successful programme helped develop and integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) across the member states including Ireland.

Irish Red Cross mobilised staff and volunteers in their respective communities to deliver quality mental health support and manage distress in a safe and dignified way, co-designed

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services with community and ensured the process of service adaptation to the changing needs. IRC components of the mental health programme are aligned with The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's MHPSS Framework and correspond to the layered principle of complimentary supports to meet the needs of different groups

1. Basic Psychosocial support
2. Focused psychosocial support
3. Psychological support

Recognising the importance to address the mental health impact of work on wellbeing of staff and volunteers, IRC has also developed a program targeting caring for staff and volunteers.

To sustain the capacity built from the EU4Health and so as to embed MHPSS in Irish Red Cross, we are seeking to recruit an experienced MPHSS professional with deep expertise in organisational and system capacity strengthening to bring MHPSS forward in IRC by positioning our work with government stakeholders, and broadening our reach to all migrants groups in Ireland.

Following the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement policy on addressing mental health and psychosocial needs, IRC acknowledges the importance of MHPSS.

The IRC current Strategic Plan 2025-2030 (Irish Red Cross: draft strategy 2025-2030) for the first time has included Mental Health in its 5 core strategic objectives. The aim is to layer mental health response and awareness on all of the IRC emergency and humanitarian response activities. The development of this role is key to the success of this strategic aim.

To lead the Irish Red Cross in the development and implementation of its Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Strategy specifically to develop the vision and capacity within the organisation in the area of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS), specifically in 1) Integration of MHPSS in Disaster preparedness and response, 2) Community based MHPSS activities, e.g. branch level regular activities, 3) support roll out of PFA in prison programme.

SUMMARY OF ROLE

The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Lead will be responsible for contributing to the development of a sustainable MHPSS strategy and its implementation. The role will lead on the long term integration of mental health and psychosocial support across programmes. This involves working with managers across departments (national services, branches, migration and emergency response) to ensure:

- Integration of the PFA approach in all emergency and disaster response
- Capacity among the IRC to stand up appropriate MHPSS in disaster / humanitarian response, which includes skills building and setting up processes
- Implementation of MHPSS projects on a humanitarian basis where gaps exist for vulnerable forced migrants. This will require exploring new funding opportunities, building strategic partnerships on national and international levels, and identifying ways to integrate services into existing national and local support systems.

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The post holder will oversee the implementation of community-based activities, emergency response interventions, volunteer and staff wellbeing programs, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

The IRC is recognised as a national Psychological First Aid (PFA) provider and is included in Ireland's national emergency preparedness framework. As part of this role, the IRC is tasked with scaling up and refreshing PFA skills among its volunteers and staff, as well as other key stakeholders.

A key focus will be on establishing sustainable structures to support the psychosocial wellbeing of IRC personnel and volunteers, thereby improving retention, reducing burnout, and fostering a resilient workforce.

This role will have responsibility for line managing staff: a clinical lead and the team delivering training in PFA/ SH+ to members, staff and those supporting all migrants groups in Ireland, and will be supported by an administrator.

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy and Advocacy

- Responsible for being in touch with MHPSS initiatives within the Movement components, such as MHPSS Central Asia and Europe Network, MHPSS Movement Hub, IFRC Regional Office for Europe, Red Cross EU Office, National Societies, to collect and share best practice
- Policy development and ensuring policy coherence with International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement policy on addressing mental health and psychosocial needs
- Ensure that MHPSS practitioners are up to date with best practice guidelines and resources.
- Support IRC with advocacy to relevant authorities to strengthen integration of MHPSS and ensure access to MHPSS services on a system level.
- Contribute to HR policy review to ensure supports for self-care and psychological wellbeing for staff and volunteers
- Contribute to development of mental health strategy implementation plan
- Describe / represent IRCs capacity MHPSS at a high level to different depts in the Irish government system specially PFA

Oversee MHPSS capacity strengthening on individual level

- Ensure quality by standardisation of MHPSS capacity strengthening of volunteers and staff through development of MHPSS competency framework, training, follow-up and supervision in Irish Red Cross
- **Update Volunteer Competency Framework with PFA skills:** Revise the IRC's volunteer and staff competency profiles to include PFA as a core skill. Integrate this into the skills matrix and volunteer CRM system to support needs mapping and long-term planning
- Provide adequate technical support to MHPSS to key actors and members (volunteers) (first aid responders, community leaders, health care professionals,

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volunteers, IPAS, Gardai etc.) and continue to adapt it to changing context dynamics (e.g. online, face to face sessions, emergency, etc.).

- Develop content for and deliver /facilitate awareness raising sessions to different people affected by crisis with a special focus on the most vulnerable
- Set up a system of continuous MHPSS skill development through supportive supervision, communities of practice, peer learning and exchange.

Lead mental health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency & disaster preparedness

- Advise the National Emergency Coordination Group on the role of mental health in emergency preparedness, response and recovery. This will involve co-creating resources with government stakeholders and supporting and advising on the roll out. Integrating psychosocial support systematically into disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, ensuring that interventions are timely, culturally appropriate, and aligned with broader humanitarian efforts.
- Participate in national, regional, internal IRC coordination forums
- Collaborate with Disaster and Emergency Manager to develop and formalise an MHPSS in Emergencies Framework that aligns with national disaster management protocols. The framework should include activities Before Emergencies, During Emergencies, After Emergencies
- Advise on the assessment / contribute to the assessment of the MHPSS needs of individuals and groups affected by crisis
- Work in close contact with National Services team to provide a coordinated and integrated response to the needs of our MHPSS beneficiaries, and provides the technical support to other teams Ensure availability of a referral pathways and updated referral database, including the MHPSS services

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) of MHPSS program

- Set up, develop and ensure implementation of MEAL processes is critical for ensuring quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvement of MHPSS interventions, including review of materials
- Ensure tracking progress of MHPSS activities in real time.
- Assess outcomes and impact of MHPSS interventions.
- Ensure transparency and responsiveness to the MHPSS needs of target groups through setting up feedback mechanisms, involving community representatives in program design and decision-making.
- Documenting lessons learned from emergency responses.
- Sharing best practices across organisation to advocate internally for MHPSS integration
- Disseminate results externally for advocating and promoting IRC as MHPSS provider on a national level.
- Develop partnerships with academic institutions to institutionalise evidence collected from IRC activities through research activities.

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Contribute to development of system for supporting staff and volunteer wellbeing across organisation

- **Formalise a Wellbeing Framework:**

Develop a comprehensive framework for staff and volunteer care through close collaboration between the MHPSS team and key functions, including:

- Branch and Volunteering Development
- Communications
- Training
- Human Resources
- Branch representatives

This framework could take the form of a dedicated internal document or be integrated into existing IRC guidance on volunteer and staff engagement.

- **Create and Promote a Wellbeing Activity Plan:**

Develop a practical plan for wellbeing-related activities and promote it across the organisation. This should go beyond clinical mental health support to include basic and focused psychosocial interventions such as:

- PFA (Psychological First Aid) training
- Psychoeducation sessions
- Regular formal and informal team meetings
- Staff appreciation initiatives
- Practical resources for branch managers and team leaders to foster supportive environments (e.g. *Guidance Note for Team Leaders – MHPSS Hub*)

REQUIREMENTS

Essential Criteria

- Minimum of 5 years of full-time professional experience in MHPSS, with at least 5 years in humanitarian contexts, including crisis and conflict settings
- Significant program management skills, evidenced by previous work in large-scale organisations or global companies; candidates with diverse experiences in managing expansive, multifaceted projects or programs outside the traditional humanitarian sector are encouraged to apply. This experience should showcase competencies in strategic planning, resource management, and the successful implementation of complex initiatives
- Proven leadership and team management experience, including working with multidisciplinary and multicultural teams
- Experience in relationship cultivation and management with governments and state agencies
- Management, training and supervision experience required
- Experience in mental health and protection work with displaced persons, refugees, returnees and migrants

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Desirable Criteria

- Red Cross/Red Crescent Experience in community-based development programs
- Experience in detention operations and/or protection
- MHPSS technical knowledge and skills
- MHPSS Program design and planning
- Training and facilitation
- Mentoring and Supervision
- Staff/Volunteer Management
- Advocacy and Humanitarian Diplomacy

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Irish Red Cross offers the following benefits in addition to salary

- A 5% employers' contribution to a company contributory pension scheme
- Closure of the office on Good Friday, plus two additional 'privilege days' to be used at Easter and Christmas respectively.
- Death in Service benefit of four times salary
- Flexible working hours, including opportunities for hybrid working.
- Further education, training and learning supports
- Travel (bike-to-work schemes/tax saver commuter tickets)

The Irish Red Cross is an equal opportunities employer. We value diversity and aspire to reflect this in our workforce. We welcome applications for people from all sections of the community, irrespective of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for this role, please forward a copy of your CV, together with a cover letter setting out how you meet the essential and desirable criteria for this role to:

jobs@redcross.ie

Your email should contain *MPHSS [Candidate Name]* in the subject line.

Applications should be in .pdf or MS Word format, and with file names in the following format: **<Surname>, <First name> - CV and <Surname>, <First name> - Cover Letter**

The closing date for applications is 6pm 3rd December 2025

Shortlisting for interview will be on the basis of the essential and desirable criteria for this role.

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