



22 January 2016

Mr David Cross
Chairperson
The Irish Association of Physical Therapists
6-9 Trinity Street
Dublin 2

Title of physical therapist

Dear Mr Cross

I refer to your response to my consultation on the question of protecting the title of *physical therapist* under section 95(3) of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005. I want to thank the Irish Association of Physical Therapists for its careful consideration of the complexities of this issue.

As you know, I also consulted with and received submissions from a number of other relevant organisations, namely Athletic Rehabilitation Therapists Ireland, the Health Service Executive, the Irish Association of Rehabilitation Medicine, the Irish College of General Practitioners, the IMPACT Trade Union, the Institute of Physical Therapy & Applied Science, and the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists. Other organisations and individuals have also written to me on the issue.

I have considered the points outlined in the submissions and correspondence including those of your Association about the use of the title *of physical therapist* and whether it should be protected under the Act and I have examined the various options put forward. I have endeavoured to take into account, appropriately and subject to ensuring public protection, the legitimate concerns of the current users of the title and the other parties that may be affected by my decisions in this matter. I have come to the conclusion that, on balance, protecting the title under the Act would be the best way to eliminate the ongoing risk of title confusion and the consequent risks to public safety.

In examining the various options on title protection, I was particularly impressed with the efforts of the 2 main professional bodies involved, the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists and the Irish Association of Physical Therapists, to find an acceptable and workable solution to the issue. The process that led to a joint proposal seems to have engendered mutual respect for, and understanding of, the respective positions and scopes of practice of the memberships of both bodies. While the draft proposal was presented without prejudice I think it contains the basis for a solution at this time.