

Social Workers in Adult Mental Health

(Special Interest Group of the Irish Association of Social Workers)

Group Protocol

1. The Group

1.1 Title of the Group

The full title of the Group is ‘Social Workers in Adult Mental Health’, hereinafter referred to as SWAMH

1.2 Aims of SWAMH

The aims of SWAMH are:

To promote continuous professional development and quality practice in the specialist area of adult mental health social work

To provide a national level forum for members to share information, to be informed and to be proactive in the pursuit of best practice

To be a voice for the Mental Health client group

To provide Social Workers in Adult Mental Health with an effective and representative voice within the Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW) on all matters concerning them and to assist the IASW in formulating policy on mental health services.

To contribute to the IASW AGM by way of motions and debate

To nominate delegates to a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations.

1.3 Organisation of SWAMH

Each year an Annual General Meeting (AGM), open to all SWAMH members, shall be held and at that meeting a committee shall be elected consisting of three officers and a minimum of three and a maximum of 13 other members.

2. SWAMH Officers

2.1 Number and Title of Officers

There shall be three SWAMH Officers – Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, each of whom shall be a member of IASW.

2.2 SWAMH Chairperson

The Chairperson:

Shall represent the views of the membership

Shall preside over the AGM and all meetings of the Committee.

Shall provide the AGM with a report on SWAMH’s activities since the previous AGM.

Is responsible for drawing up the agenda for committee meetings.

Is responsible for ensuring that the group complies with its own rules and procedures.

Shall be the representative on IASW Council, or arrange for an alternative delegate (a member or associate member of IASW) from the committee.

Shall set agreed dates for committee meetings for the entire year, at the inaugural meeting held after each AGM.

Shall call a special meeting as appropriate on 7 working days notice.

Shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting as appropriate on 21 working days notice.

The Chairperson shall be elected annually at the AGM, and the sitting Chairperson shall be eligible for re-election as Chairperson up to a maximum of three consecutive years.

2.3 SWAMH Secretary

The Secretary:

Shall maintain an up to date database of all Social Workers in adult mental health services.

Shall in accordance with rule 3.1 draw up and issue all members a notice and agenda for the Annual General Meeting.

Shall assist the Chairperson in compiling a report on the SWAMH's activities since the previous AGM.

Shall, in accordance with rule 3.2 draw up and issue all members of the committee a notice and agenda of each Committee meeting.

Shall provide each member of the Committee with the minutes of the previous meeting.

Shall be responsible for bringing all correspondence to the attention of the committee, and for issuing correspondence on the recommendation of the committee on behalf of SWAMH.

The Secretary shall be elected annually at the AGM, and the sitting Secretary shall be eligible for re-election as Secretary up to a maximum of three consecutive years.

2.4 SWAMH Treasurer

The Treasurer:

Shall keep records of Income and Expenditure, hold and be responsible for all monies collected and provide an up-to-date Financial Statement to each committee meeting and a written statement to the Annual General Meeting.

A Committee member claiming exceptional expenses in accordance with rule 4.2 shall make such claim to the Treasurer and on receiving payment shall provide the Treasurer with a signed and dated receipt for the appropriate amount.

Shall issue signed and dated receipts for all monies added to SWAMH's finances, and retain a copy of each such receipt.

Shall supply an annual income/expenditure account to the Treasurer of the IASW, countersigned by another officer.

May apply to the national treasurer of the IASW for funding as required.

The Treasurer shall be elected annually at the AGM, and the sitting Treasurer shall be eligible for re-election as Treasurer up to a maximum of three consecutive years.

2.5 Role of Committee Members

Committee members:

Shall attend all committee meetings

Shall be responsible for communication on behalf of the committee, with adult mental health social workers in a specific agreed geographic area (carrier pigeon role)

Shall act as a link between working groups and the main committee

Shall assist in the planning, delivery and review of CPD events.

3 SWAMH Meetings

3.1 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Committee shall decide the date, time, place and agenda of the AGM.

The Secretary shall send a copy of the motions and agenda to the IASW.

3.1.1 The outgoing Chairperson shall provide the incoming Chairperson with all information and documentation in relation to his/her term as Chairperson.

3.1.2 The outgoing Secretary shall provide the incoming Secretary with all information and documentation in relation to his/her term as Secretary.

3.1.3 The outgoing Treasurer shall provide the incoming Treasurer with all data, in order and up to date, relevant to the role of treasurer, with complete accounts in relation to the previous year.

3.1.4 Election of officers and committee

Ideally committee membership would be representative of the wide range of expertise and of the geographic spread of social workers, to foster inclusiveness.

Candidates for officer positions shall be present at the AGM, nominated and seconded.

In the event of more than one nominee for a post, an election shall be held.

Two election officers, who are not going forward for election, shall be appointed to conduct the election.

The election shall be by secret ballot, and the nominees shall be appointed by simple majority.

In the event of a tie, the election shall be re-run following a short presentation by each candidate.

In the event of a second tie, the chairperson shall have a casting vote, except where she/he is a candidate for the position of chair, where the casting vote shall fall to the secretary.

Candidates for committee membership shall be present at the AGM, nominated and seconded.

Those unable to attend may express their interest by writing formally to the secretary in advance of the meeting.

The committee may co-opt members as appropriate.

3.2 Committee Meetings

3.2.1 The Committee shall meet not less than four times per year excluding the AGM, but more frequently if considered necessary by the committee. The quorum for all meetings of the Committee shall be five (5) members.

3.3 Special Committee Meetings/Extraordinary General Meetings

The SWAMH Secretary shall call a Special Meeting of the Committee or an Extraordinary General Meeting on receipt of WRITTEN requests from five (5) members of the Committee, or on receipt of written requests from twenty-five (25) members of the SWAMH Group.

3.4 Absence

3.4.1 In the event of the Chairperson/Secretary being unavailable to attend any committee or annual general meeting, a Chairperson/Secretary shall be appointed by consensus or by majority vote from amongst those present to act as chairperson/secretary for that meeting.

3.4.2 A person shall cease to be a member of the committee where he/she has been absent from three consecutive meetings without contacting the Chairperson or Secretary, unless such absence has been excused by resolution of the committee prior to the third consecutive meeting.

3.5 Working Groups

The committee of SWAMH may from time to time establish working groups to consider areas of special interest on behalf of the committee.

Each such working group shall contain at least one committee member.

That committee member shall be responsible to provide a progress report to each committee meeting

Each working group shall ensure that all work undertaken in the name of SWAMH is presented to and approved by the committee before it is submitted to any agency, body or person outside of SWAMH.

4. SWAMH Finances

4.1 Collection of contributions

The Committee may, from time to time, authorise the collection of contributions from all SWAMH Members to pay for postage, telephone calls, operating expenses and exceptional expenses claims of Committee Members in accordance with 4.2 below.

4.2 Exceptional Expenses Claims

4.2.1 All SWAMH activities are undertaken on a voluntary basis.

4.2.2 Exceptions to this will be considered on individual application to the Treasurer within one calendar month of the meeting/expense in question. The Treasurer and Chairperson will consider and decide on each application, based on agreed criteria.

4.2.3 Agreed criteria for financial assistance:

Applicant is (a) retired, (b) unemployed, (c) on long-term sick leave, (d) a student or (e) there are other exceptional circumstances.

4.3 Use of SWAMH funds

All expenditure shall be ratified by the committee.

5 Alterations to SWAMH Protocols

SWAMH Protocols may be altered at the AGM or an Extraordinary General Meeting.

Motions for any alteration to SWAMH Protocols shall be proposed, seconded and decided by simple majority vote by those attending the meeting.

6 Conflict between SWAMH Protocols and IASW Rules

No SWAMH Protocol may be passed, or altered, in such a way as to conflict with IASW Rules.

31/03/05 Draft of SWAMH Protocols, compiled by Margaret Groarke, Pauline McGinley, Donal O'Malley and Celine O'Connor for final comment by committee members. To be discussed and hopefully ratified at our next committee meeting in preparation for our AGM.