

Applications or a proposal to form a Special Interest Group (SIG) shall be approved by the Board of Directors. This may be initiated by any group of members of the Association, by the Board or one of its committees. SIGs shall operate to the agreed bye-laws, policies and procedures of the Association including but not limited to these: their Terms of Reference and Application for CPD Event Proposals.

Overview

Special Interest Groups are not a separate entity from IASW but are core to the Association where they play an important role in offering advice and support to the Board, it's Committees' and the staff in advancing the objectives, the Strategy, and the Plans of the organisation. All positions adopted by any SIG must be in line with the policies and values of the Association.

1. Membership

- 1.1 Membership of a Special Interest Group is open to any current member of the Association. The Board may however designate terms of membership of any SIG as being restricted to any cohort of social work.
- 1.2 Members of a SIG may consider setting up a subgroup to focus on a particular need/issue. A nominee of any such working group would sit on the SIG Committee.
- 1.3 A person shall cease to be a Member of the SIG where they have failed to pay their subscription to the Association in accordance with the Membership policy.

2. Function & Aims of Group

2.1 SIG functions include but are not limited to:

- *To advise and contribute to the development of policy within the Association.*
- *To assist in the realisation of the aims of the Association*
- *To encourage the continuous professional development of members*
- *To align with the global definition of social work in all activities.*

2.2 The aims of the SIG include but are not limited to:

- *To promote the continuous professional development of SIG members [insert area of work]*
- *To provide a national forum for members to share information*
- *To inform members of developments relevant to their practice*
- *To speak up for and with people and communities in advocating for services relevant to meet their needs*
- *To provide Social Workers in this aspect of social work with an effective voice via the Association in contributing to national policy and legislation.*
- *To contribute to the AGM by way of motions and debate from the SIG AGM*
- *To actively participate at the Annual Conference*

- *To nominate members via the Board onto working groups, committees, statutory and voluntary organisations*

2.3 The IASW provides a range of supports to SIGs to run CPD events, mainly through the Professional Development Coordinator (including promotion, venues, booking, online events, event structure). Council Groups who wish to hold a CPD need to submit a proposal for each event to facilitate the planning and allocation of resources to IASW CPD events. Proposals are required whether or not the proposed event requires funding.

A request for proposals for each year is made by the coordinator towards the end of the preceding year. The Professional Development Coordinator will contact those proposing events in January regarding the outcome of their proposal and for further detail as required.

Proposals for an CPD event should give as much notice as possible and can be made at other times but there is no guarantee that proposals can be facilitated due to limited resources.

Priority will be given to proposals that meet either one of the objectives of the IASW Strategic Plan or align with one or more priorities of the HSCP Office. CPD proposals that align with the HSCP Office CPD priorities will inform the CPD event funding applications made by the IASW Professional Development Coordinator to the HSCP Office and will be subject to the funding criteria for that office. A condition of event funding granted by the HSE is that event participants must work in the publicly funded healthcare service.

Please don't hesitate to contact cpdofficer@iasw.ie at any time to discuss proposals for IASW SIG events and/or to find out about the range of supports available.

3. The SIG Committee

The Committee will include the Chair, Secretary and up to four other SIG members.

3.1 The Role of the SIG Committee is to:

- organises the day-to-day business of the SIG,
- to adhere to the Constitution and the Bye-laws of the IASW
- to liaise with IASW office to ensure adequate information flow as to the work of a SIG.
- Special Interest Groups, or any working group they may establish, shall not operate a bank account

3.2 Committee members:

- Shall attend all committee meetings
- Shall assist in the planning, delivery, and review of CPD events

3.3 Chair: It is the role of the SIG Chair to:

- a. Chair meetings of the SIG and SIG's AGM.

- b. Set agenda in advance of the meetings in consultation with the Secretary
- c. Ensure that all actions and decisions taken are not in conflict with the stated aims and purposes of the Association
- d. In consultation and collaboration with the SIG members shall ensure that all agreed decisions are implemented
- e. To be the figurehead for the SIG regarding communications to the Chair of the IASW Board of Directors.

3.4 Secretary: It is the role of the SIG Secretary to:

- a. In consultation with the Chair agree and circulate the agenda for SIG and all relevant committee meetings
- b. Ensure effective communication with members
- c. Check minutes with chair and circulate

3.5 Succession planning is an important consideration for all SIGs. New members to the committee need to have the opportunity for an induction from experienced committee members. Encouraging membership to each SIG needs to be a priority for every SIG committee. An effective communication system with regular CPD events is a key to encourage membership.

4. SIG Meetings and Annual General Meeting

4.1 Meetings and the Annual General Meeting

4.1.1 SIGs shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year and elect a new committee. The SIG Chair & Secretary shall be elected annually at the AGM and shall be eligible for re-election up to a maximum of three years , if possible.

4.1.2 The SIG shall meet not less than four times per year and can include the AGM, but more frequently if considered necessary by the SIG/committee. The quorum for all meetings (SIG & Committee) shall be four (4) members. The SIG Committee can meet as frequently as they deem necessary.

4.1.3 Templates for agenda's, minutes, AGM notices, ballot papers, etc. can be obtained from the IASW office.

4.1.4 In person Meetings: Most SIG's can access venues for committee meetings, we are unable to fund the hiring of rooms for SIG meeting's; however, exceptional circumstances can be considered by the IASW treasurer. Please contact the office for further information.

Virtual SIG Meetings: SIG's can use the IASW Zoom account to host online Zoom meetings. Please contact the office for further information.

4.2 Additional Committee Meetings/Extraordinary General Meetings

4.2.1 The Secretary shall call an additional meeting of the Committee or an Extraordinary General Meeting on receipt of written requests from four (4) members of the Committee, or on receipt of written requests from ten (10) members of the SIG. Requests will state the specific business that they wish to consider at any such meeting.

4.3 Reporting

4.3.1 The SIG may forward a copy of the minutes of meetings to a nominated person in the IASW office.

4.3.2 SIGs shall prepare an annual report on their activities and membership each year in advance of the Associations AGM.

4.3.3 Up to date information regarding the contact details of the members of each SIG shall be forwarded to the offices.

4.4 Absence

4.4.1 In the event of the Chairperson not being available to attend the committee meeting, a Chairperson shall be appointed by consensus or by majority vote from amongst those present to act as Chairperson for that meeting, this same process should also apply if the secretary is unavailable to attend.

4.4.2 A person shall cease to be a member of the SIG committee where he/she has been absent from three consecutive meetings without contacting the Chairperson or Secretary in advance.

4.5 Working Groups/IASW nominees

4.5.1 A SIG Committee may from time to time establish working groups to consider areas of special interest on behalf of the committee. Any SIG working group should contain at least one committee member, and that committee member shall provide a report for each SIG meeting.

4.5.2 Each working group shall ensure that all work undertaken in the name of the SIG/IASW is presented to and approved by the committee prior to any decision being made by IASW in relation to it being actioned, to avoid committing the Company to any position or course of action.

4.5.3 IASW Board may request the SIG to propose a committee or SIG member to represent IASW at a meeting or as a representative or nominee to a working group, related to the area of interest of the SIG. IASW will offer support and advice as required and where possible.

4.5.4 Where a members has been nominated through the SIG/IASW to represent the SIG/IASW at a one-off or occurring event/working group, a short update via email to the IASW is required following the event / working group meeting.

5. SIG Network

5.1 The SIG Network meets quarterly. Attending Network meetings is a requirement for each SIG committee. The Chair ideally or a nominated IASW member from the SIG committee must attend. This is important to ensure that all relevant information between the SIG and IASW is communicated to all SIG members. All Network representatives will be required to prepare and present a short report on the activities of their committee since the last Network meeting. The report should be emailed to the office no later than one week before the meeting.

6. Communication to external bodies such as Government Departments, National Organisations, and the Media on behalf of the Association.

6.1 All communication to external bodies from Special Interest Groups shall be approved in advance by the Chair of the IASW Board or its nominated person. The Board shall be informed by the SIG committees of the Association, regarding any proposed meeting with political representatives, all media, Government officials or senior managers within statutory bodies or national organisations and any such meeting shall only go ahead if it includes the Chair of the Board or a person nominated by the Board. A SIG shall not nominate anybody to any committee or network external to the Association without the express permission of the Board.

6.2 The name of the Association, the logo, or the address of the Headquarters or of any committee or Group, shall not be used otherwise than in connection with Association business approved by the Directors and neither the name nor the address shall be printed or written on any notepaper or other document not belonging to or issued by the Association

7. Conflict & Dispute Resolution

7.1 The IASW is committed to prompt and fair resolution of all disputes of any nature which may arise during SIG business. Should a dispute arise within the SIG/committee that cannot be resolved, the SIG Chairperson must contact the IASW office. A nominated person will be assigned by the IASW Board to assist the SIG in resolving the matter in question. Should the matter fail to be resolved, then the nominated person will prepare a report for the IASW Board when the decision of the Board of the IASW will be final.

8. Terms of Reference

8.1 The Terms of Reference of the Special Interest Groups will be reviewed by the Board every three years or more frequently if the SIG or the Board believe it necessary. This may include the re-establishment, amalgamation, dissolution, or other reconfiguration of any or all the SIG's.



9. Important documents SIG Committee adhere to / comply with:-

- SIG Housekeeping
- SIG Network CPD Event Proposal Form
- What's App T&C's
- SIG Network Terms of Reference
- Zoom Bookings & Etiquette
- Expenses Policy & Claim Form
- Social Media Policy

This Version approved at the Board meeting of 11th September 2023.

Superseding the version of: not applicable.

Chairperson's Signature: _____ Date 12th September 2023