

# Code of Practice for Irish Association of Social Workers' Members

In our Code of Ethics, the IASW aims to provide members with the principles upon which their social work practice should be based. On joining the Association, members agree to comply with the Code of Ethics.

As it can be difficult in some circumstances to see how these principles can be applied in the workplace, the IASW has developed this Code of Practice for members, which is the practical application of the Code to Ethics to members' professional working lives. This is a recommended standard of practice only. The IASW can refuse membership to anyone who is proven to have failed to meet these standards but does not have the authority to remove a social worker from their workplace as the IASW is not a regulatory body. However members and indeed all social workers are bound by the terms of their employment contract and their conduct can be open to scrutiny by a court of law.

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Representing Social Work in Ireland since 1971.  
A Member of the International Federation of Social Workers

# Irish Association of Social Workers' Code of Practice

## The ISAW recommends the following standards to its members.

### Members will:

- Act at all times in the best interests of those who use social work services;
- Carry out their work to the best of their ability;
- Protect and promote the rights of those who use social work services while ensuring that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people;
- Treat people who use social work services and colleagues with dignity and respect in order to ensure that no one is harmed by their interventions;
- Respect the wishes and decisions, where appropriate, of people who use social work services, recognising that at times these decisions could lead people into conflict with the law or other difficulties;
- Ensure confidentiality in all aspects of their work, except when to do so would put those who use social work services or others at serious risk or where the law requires disclosure;
- Respect diversity and difference;
- Act in an honest and trustworthy fashion in their work;
- Support people who use social work services to obtain as much information as possible including access to their social work records;
- Support people who use social work services to make complaints if and when appropriate;
- Explain decisions as far as possible to those who use social work services except in situations where to give information would put someone in danger;
- Declare conflicts of interest.
- Take note of work place policies and procedures both in terms of how they might affect themselves but also how they affect those who use social work services;
- Follow work place policies in relation to accepting gifts and money from those using social work services and others;
- Make themselves aware of relevant work place policies and procedures and take all reasonable steps to ensure their own health and safety;

- Follow work place policies in relation to health and safety.
- Provide support and supervision to students on placement with them and ensure that social work students are aware of the Code of Ethics and Code of Practice of the IASW;
- Report colleagues whose practice may be abusive, discriminatory or unsafe to their employer and if appropriate to the relevant professional body;
- Uphold and advance the values and knowledge of the profession;
- Act to prevent the unauthorised and unqualified practice of social work;
- Be accountable for their practice and take responsibility for improving and maintaining their skills

### Members will not:

- Abuse, neglect or harm those who use social work services or their colleagues;
- Form inappropriate personal and intimate relationships with people who use social work services;
- Discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or membership of the Traveller community;
- Abuse the trust of those who use social work services;
- Prioritise the interests of an agency or an employer to the detriment of those who use social work services;
- Take part in actions that may be unsafe for those who use social work services;
- Use derogatory language about those who use social work services or colleagues;
- Bully or harass those who use social work services or colleagues;
- Behave in such a way in or outside the work place which would call into question their suitability to work as a social worker or be a member of IASW;
- Support commercial products in order to foster and promote the independence of professional judgement unless it is proven that a product has clear benefits for those who use social work services;
- Accept gifts or favours that could reasonably be interpreted as seeking to exert undue influence or to obtain preferential treatment.