



IASW

Irish Association of Social Workers
Cumann na hÉireann um Oibríthe Sóisialta

4th September 2018

Re. IASW Submission on CORU Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

Dear Ginny,

The Irish Association of Social Workers is the national body for social workers in the Republic of Ireland. It was founded in 1971 and has a membership of almost 1,300 social workers. The IASW is an active member of the International Federation of Social Workers, which represents professional associations from over 55 different countries with more than 350,000 social workers in all parts of the world.

The IASW membership value the need to have a strong code of ethics and professional boundaries and welcome the opportunity to submit their views on the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics 2018.

The IASW are of the view that following social work responsibilities have not been captured by the Code:

As a social worker, you must:

Challenge unjust structures, policies and procedures

Develop critical consciousness through reflecting on structural sources of oppression and/or privilege

Challenge structural conditions that contribute to social exclusion, marginalisation and oppression and work towards an inclusive society

Work to bring to the attention of their policymakers, politicians, and the public situations in which policies and resources are inadequate or in which policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful. In doing so, social workers must not be penalized.

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Work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the effectiveness and efficiency of their services.

Treat people as whole persons

Recognize the biological, psychological, social, spiritual and environmental dimensions of people's lives and understand and treat all people as whole persons. Such recognition is used to formulate holistic assessments and interventions with the full participation of people, organizations, and communities with whom social workers engage.

Professional Integrity

Reflect and critically evaluate your practice and continuously develop self-awareness of your impact on others

Regarding section 27. Responsibilities specific to social workers

We consider it critical that this section is amended to include the following:

Conflict of Interest

Not knowingly work with a service user with whom you have or have had a personal relationship that would interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgement or where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the service user.

You should inform service users when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue. This may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral and arrangements for continuation of services.

When services are provided to two or more people (family, couples or group) social workers should clarify with all parties the nature of their obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimise any conflict of interest.

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Social Justice

You must promote social justice

Supervision

You must seek and engage in supervision in professional practice on an ongoing and regular basis in line with knowledge, skills, competence and experience.

Where supervision is mandated and resourced by employing organisations, social workers must receive supervision from within their line management structure as per agency policy. If there are identified regular difficulties in delivering on supervision, a contingency plan must be agreed and implemented.

(Supervision as a professional practice is embedded in social work and integral to the development of the profession. Professional supervision is the cornerstone of safe, high quality social work practice and is essential to the management of casework and clinical issues, the development of the profession and managing the emotional impact of the work. Social work is an academic discipline and a practice-based profession: supervision is key to the development of reflective practice and practice knowledge).

Professional Indemnity

As a social worker you should ensure that your agency's professional indemnity insurance cover protects you. Where potential legal action may fall outside your employer's policy, you should ensure that you maintain adequate professional indemnity cover.

Social workers in independent practice should maintain adequate professional indemnity and public liability insurance cover as appropriate to protect service users.

(Note: Members report that it is difficult to arrange Professional Indemnity Insurance here. If the practitioner is providing services to children they can get good cover with public liability included from an UK based insurer, but otherwise it is not straightforward. The IASW will do some more research on this and apprise members and CORU of the outcome in due course.)

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Performance

9 (f):

Would be better to read “be able to justify any decisions you make within your scope of practice, being always accountable for what you do, what you fail to do and for your behaviour.”

10.1

- The situation of involuntary service users/clients is not considered.
- Is this all compatible with upcoming Assisted Decision-Making law and regulation?

14.1 (a)

Not clear that this only refers to adverse events within a service, or is it any adverse event?

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Is it possible to use registration number on national data record management systems and non-paper-based filing systems?

Non-discriminatory practice is required by all professions by law.

- It is not applicable to charge just social workers with the need to respect diversity etc
- Inclusive practice should be required by all professions.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office via email officemanager@iasw.ie or on tel. 01 6774838.

Sincerely,

Aine McGuirk
Chairperson

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