

Setting up a New Special Interest Group (SIG)

Getting Started!

Social workers of any grade can be a member of an IASW SIG.

1. Aim of the Group

The SIG should refer to IASW Memorandum and Articles: Objectives Point 2 and IASW SIG Protocols point 2:

IASW believes all social workers should be a member of a SIG because:

- Membership of a SIG will offer you a forum to network, discuss professional issues outside your immediate work setting and access information relevant to your area of practice.
- Professional benefits: Will assist with meeting the CORU CPD requirements and completing your portfolio.
- Will enhance your CV,
- As SIG member you will have access to information regarding IASW CPD events, and as an IASW this will be at a reduced price
- Will allow you to stay up to date with national policy and legislation relevant to your practice
- Provides a forum for you to raise issues of concern, via the IASW and have these issues addressed such as through IASW meeting with Government ministers/ HSE officials
- Provides an opportunity for you to contribute to or be part of national HSE, Government, voluntary organisations working groups.

2. Application to the IASW Board of Directors

Application to form a Special Interest Group shall be approved by the Board of Directors and Special Interest Groups shall operate to the agreed policy and procedures of Association. See attached application form.

3. Number, Title of Officers & Roles & Responsibilities

(See IASW SIG Protocols)

All SIGs should have a committee elected from within the SIG at an AGM, to undertake the organisation of the SIG. Each SIG should elect a Chair, Secretary, and Vice Chair, in accordance with the IASW Rules & Byelaws, these Committee members **must be members of the IASW**. The committee membership must be open to all the social work grades, and should seek to include members from all the relevant areas of specialisms within the SIG, and whenever possible to include members from the HSE and voluntary Section 38 and 39 organisations, as well as having a good geographical representation from around the country.

4. Succession Planning and Recruitment of New Members to the SIG Committee

Succession planning is an important consideration for every SIG. 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.

IASW advises the SIG secretary to keep an up to date list of all SIG members' contact details. While membership of IASW remains at present optional for general SIG members (non-committee members), each SIG committee needs to encourage membership of the IASW in the interest of the profession.

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5. Meetings

See IASW Protocols

Venue: Most SIG's can access venues for committee meetings, but the IASW offices are available after 6pm during the working week. 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. IASW can fund the hiring of rooms for CPD events as per the IASW Guidelines see below.

6. AGM & Conference (See IASW SIG Protocols)

Every year a SIG should hold an AGM, Annual Meeting or Committee Meeting to elect the new SIG Working Committee. Usually the AGM will be part of a CPD conference event.

The conference can be on any topic that is deemed relevant to the SIG. In order to get funding the SIG will need to complete the IASW funding request form (attached as an appendix). The application will be reviewed and considered by the Professional Development Coordinator, Chair & Treasurer of the IASW. If the funding application is approved the SIG will be notified and planning for the conference and AGM can continue.

Please contact the Associations Professional Development Coordinator for further information on:

- Choosing a topic / date / venue
- Conference / Event format
- Setting a participant fee and reduction for IASW members.
- Advertising the event
- Booking System via IASW's online system

Usually SIG's hold their AGM directly after the conference, to ensure maximum numbers and to make it easier for everyone. While the conference is for anyone, only members of the SIG can attend the AGM. The Chairperson of the SIG presides over the AGM, and the SIG Secretary takes the minutes for the next SIG Committee meeting.

7. Council

The IASW Council meets four times per year, once a quarter. Attending IASW Council meetings is a requirement for each SIG committee. The Chair ideally or a nominated IASW member from the SIG committee must attend the IASW Council meetings. This is important to ensure that all relevant information between the SIG and IASW is communicated to all SIG members.

All Council representatives are asked to prepare and present a short report on the activities of their Group during this quarter. The report should be emailed to the office no later than 12noon on the Friday before the meeting.

8. CPD Funding for Events & Conferences

Please find attached the associations guidelines and application forms for; Events & CPD Funding Application Form.

If you would like to organise an event please contact Cliona Murphy, Cliona is our Professional Development Coordinator and is on hand to assist you with this process. Her contact details are cpdofficer@iasw.ie / 086 7879752

9. Representing IASW

Only IASW members with approval from the IASW Board can represent the IASW

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10. Communication with External Bodies & Use of IASW Logo

Please read Section 5 of the IASW Rules & Byelaws.

The IASW office and the Board of Directors are available to provide support or guidance.

References

- *Memorandum and Articles of Association*
- *Rules & Bye-Laws*
- *Group Protocol*