



IASW

Irish Association of Social Workers
Cumann na hÉireann um Oibrithe Sóisialta

MEMO TO MEMBERS

Regarding Fitness to Practise Legal Expenses Cover

17 October, 2017

Dear IASW Member,

The establishment of CORU as the regulating body for Health & Social Care Professionals has been an important milestone in protecting the titles of the professions covered by the Health & Social Care Professionals Act 2005, in ensuring the maintenance of high standards within the various professions, and in protecting the public against sub-standard practise and/or professionals, working in the health and social care sectors.

As you are aware, as of December 31st 2014 Social Workers are now subject to CORU's "Fitness to Practise" process. Fitness to Practise begins when CORU receives a complaint about a registered health and social care professional.

One of the many benefits of IASW membership is that the IASW in conjunction with our Insurance Brokers, Glennon Insurance, have constructed an insurance policy (Fitness to Practise Legal Expenses Cover) that protects IASW members against the cost of legal expenses in the event of a member being the subject of a 'Fitness to Practise' complaint. This means that an IASW member (whose membership fee includes this FTP Legal Expenses policy), can be assured that will be able to avail of expert legal advice in defending themselves before CORU and that the cost of this will be borne by the FTP Legal Expenses policy.

We believe we have constructed a process that is simple to access, yet effective for members. Once the complaint is brought to the attention of Glennon Insurance (corunotifications@glennons.ie), our legal advisors are notified and work with the member in preparing a response to CORU within the 14 days allotted. The feedback to date is the process is working well and many complaints received to date have been disposed of at the earliest possible stage with the assistance of our legal advisors.

The IASW wishes to highlight that this FTP Legal Expenses Cover is automatically included as a benefit of membership for the following membership categories:

- Full Time members
- Part-Time members
- First Year Post Qualify
- Second Year Post Qualify

The IASW **does not** automatically arrange the FTP Legal Expenses Cover for the following membership categories:

- Retired
- Non-Working
- Students
- Overseas
- Honorary Members

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Should an individual within the categories, not automatically included for FTP Legal Expenses Cover, wish to avail of it they must contact the IASW to discuss further.

It is important to highlight that a valid "Fitness to Practise" Legal Expenses Cover policy must be in place at the time the **NOTIFICATION OF A COMPLAINT** is received from CORU for our legal advisors to become available to respond. This is particularly important for those members who change membership to a category without insurance coverage **AND WHO REMAIN REGISTERED**. If you are registered, a complaint can be made to CORU concerning your practice on or after Fitness to Practise opened on December 31st, 2014. If your category of membership does not include the FTP Legal Expenses Cover, you will not be covered **IN THE EVENT OF A COMPLAINT MADE AGAINST YOU**. The IASW has negotiated FTP Legal Expenses Cover insurance policy for members at a fraction of what a similar policy would be for an individual alone.

Fitness to Practise - Legal Expenses Cover

- The Policyholder is Irish Association of Social Workers
- The Insured Persons are "All Full, Part-Time, First Yr. Post Qualify, Second Yr. Post Qualify and only others specifically advised to the Company"
- An "Insured Incident" is the legal and support costs and expenses arising in the event of the commencement of a Fitness to Practise process against an insured person.
- The Limit of indemnity per Insured Person is €250,000.
- No policy excess.
- Fitness to Practise Legal Advice Helpline

In order for the IASW to continue to provide 'Fitness to Practise' Legal Expenses Cover as a membership benefit, without increasing our membership fees, the IASW has decided to consolidate our insurance policies. As a result, the IASW will no longer provide a different insurance policy which provided coverage in strictly limited circumstances and which DID NOT INCLUDE coverage for 'Fitness to Practise' legal expenses. The IASW believes that members' interests are best served in focusing on the Fitness to Practise Legal Expenses cover.

We hope this letter clarifies the benefits of the Fitness to Practise Legal Expenses Cover and reassures you that the IASW is there to support you should you need it.

If you have any questions or queries regarding the coverage, please contact administrator@iasw.ie, Danielle McGoldrick our Office Manager will answer your query within 48 hours.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Browne
Chair IASW

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