

Motion 1

Proposed by: Aine McGuirk **Seconded by:** Vivian Geiran
On behalf of the IASW Board of Directors.

That the IASW will increase the number of members on the Board of Directors, from ten (10) to eleven (11) for the coming year and that this arrangement is to be reviewed again by the Board ahead of the 2022 AGM.

Explanation: As per **Rule 45** of the IASW Constitution, *the number of Directors shall be not less than seven (7) and unless and until determined by the Company in general meeting, not more than ten (10).* As per **Rule 56**, *the Company may from time to time by ordinary resolution increase or reduce the number of Directors and may also determine in what rotation the increased or reduced number is to go out of office.*

There are currently ten Directors. One of these is stepping down at this year's AGM, creating one vacancy. The remaining nine Directors have resubmitted their names for consideration for re-election this year and there are two new candidates for the single vacancy arising. Because of the nature of the work programme currently being undertaken by the Board, allied to the valuable contribution the two 'new' candidates can bring to the Association, the Board seeks to facilitate the incorporation of the two new Directors to the Board, for the coming year .

Motion 2

Proposed by: Niamh Finucane **Seconded by:** Paula Markey

That the IASW would advocate for the recognition of social work in the provision of bereavement care in Ireland and for the provision of a bereavement social work posts in all hospitals, hospices, and nursing homes in Ireland.

Explanation: Social Workers have competence in the provision of bereavement support and bereavement counselling to bereaved relatives. Social Workers nationally, both within the acute sector and within the hospice sector, have a long history in the provision of a range of bereavement support and counselling to individuals and families as they adjust to the death of their relative. The deaths may have been sudden, such as a Road Traffic Accident, suicide, or an acute event or it may have been an anticipated death. Social workers support bereaved relatives with the psychosocial transitions that arise in their life as a result of the death, provide support in relation to practical issues and also provide therapeutic support. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of deaths where someone could not be present at the time of death, death being experienced as sudden or unexpected, or people dying before they ordinarily would have. It is expected that there will be a significant increase in the need for bereavement support and counselling in the weeks and months to come and that some of these bereaved relatives may present with complicated or disenfranchised grief. Many people may have questions about their relative's care, or around the time of death. Social

Workers are skilled communicators with the appropriate competence in grief and loss to support this work and provide a range of bereavement care for individuals and families. However, there will be a need for additional resources to meet the anticipated need and social workers should be appointed as part of the range of supports.

Motion 3

Proposed by: Anne O’Loughlin, SIGA **Seconded by:** Aidan Cooney, ASaP
On behalf of SIGA & Adult Safeguarding Associate Group.

That IASW will write to the Minister for Justice requesting that before any legislation is commenced regarding the Dying with Dignity Bill No 24 of 2020 that a legislative and regulatory framework is in place to protection a person’s right to life, basic legal rights to independent living, social care services, health services and palliative care. That the proposed legislation is compliant with supported decision-making as outlined in the Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act 2015 (which must be fully implemented) regarding the person’s free informed and unambiguous decision at the time of signing the declaration (S.9) and at the time the assistance in dying is rendered (S.11).

Explanation: The Dying with Dignity Bill No 4 of 2020 is before the Dail at 3rd Stage/ Committee Stage. The Bill is concerned with fundamental issues of human rights and solidarity. Debate must have utmost regard for the complexity and sensitivity being considered. The IASW motion is based on the need for a legal and regulatory framework to be in place before any legislation is passed that protects a person’s right to life, health, palliative care, and participation in decision making and procedural safeguards around decision making.

Motion 4

Proposed by: Kerry Cuskelly **Seconded by:** Sinead McGarry

That the IASW Board commit to conducting a scoping exercise to determine the best approach to complete a governance review of the Association, to include consultation & feedback to members.

Explanation: The IASW recently invested in developing a comprehensive and impressive advocacy strategy for the association in conjunction with Kelleher O’Meara consultancy. The strategy recommends, amongst other things that, “The focus of IASW’s Special Interest Groups would shift from being interest-based to being issue-based and that their structure within IASW’s overall governance is reviewed”. In light of this it would be prudent to conduct a full governance review of the association including, but not limited to, constitution, SIGS, associate groups, working groups, council, board, to ensure the association is fit for purpose moving forward and can fully implement the excellent advocacy strategy and statement the association now hosts.

Motion 5**Proposed by:** Paul McCarthy **Seconded by:** Kerry Cuskelly

That the IASW, in recognition of its centrality to Social Work Values, Ethics and Practice, initiate a campaign for the reinstatement of the term 'Human Rights' in the Social Workers Registration Board (CORU) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

Explanation: The forward to CORU's original Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers (Bye-Law 2011 - S.I. 143 of 2011) states "*Social Work is a profession based on principles of human rights and social justice*". In referencing "*The social work values informing the code*", item number 1 on the list of "*particular duties*" of Social Workers is to "*Uphold human rights in your practice*". Furthermore, in the original CORU Code, again at the top of the list, in the "*Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance Expected of Registered Social Workers*", under the heading "*Respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons*", item number 1 is: "*Upholding human rights in your practice*"; elaborating to describe how Social Workers "*should uphold human rights*" in their practice. Additionally, item number 9, in this same list, states that Social Workers' "*are responsible for acting in the best interests of service users*" and, as such, that Social Workers, "*must...work in line with the principles of human rights and social justice*". Indeed, in total there are 6 separate references to 'Human Rights' in CORU's original 2011 Code.

The International Federation of Social Workers' definition of Social Work states: "*Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to Social Work*". The IFSW's definition of Social Work is a beacon to Social Work practitioners across the world, many of whom tenaciously hold onto the values embodied in this definition, none more so than those working in extremely difficult, precarious, and oppressive social and political conditions. Irish Social Workers, too, also have a deep-rooted fidelity to the IFSW's definition, exemplified by the inclusion, verbatim, of the above quoted sentence in the IASW's newly revised Code of Ethics', launched just last month.

Indeed, in its Social Work Values Statement, the IASW's new Code further notes, that "*Society has an obligation to pursue justice, in all its forms, on behalf of every person including the assertion and protection of their human rights*"; and again 'Human Rights' is referenced in item number 1 of the Code's Principles of Social Work Practice. Additionally, the IASW's newly revised Code of Practice, also references 'Human Rights' noting that members must "*Protect and promote the human rights of those who use social work services*". As a further illustration of the significance of 'Human Rights' to Social Work, the phrase 'Human Rights' is referred to on 16 occasions in the 16-page British Association of Social Workers' 'Code of Ethics for Social Work: Statement of Principles'.

However, as we now know, albeit for reasons which remain speculative, there is no mention or reference to 'Human Rights' in CORU's revised Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (2019). Aside from the inherent and inextricable relationship of 'Human Rights' to Social Work Values, Ethics and Practice, and indeed that the very concept of 'Human Rights' is interwoven into the very fabric, narrative and history of Social Work, the removal

of any reference to 'Human Rights' in CORU's Code of Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers is extraordinary; not only in terms of the act of removing the phrase 'Human Rights' from the Code itself, but also, and more significantly, its effective altering of the narrative and meaning of Social Work in Ireland. This by the body which governs Social Work in Ireland, and to which Social Workers in Ireland must be registered with to practice.

As such opposition of Irish Social Workers to its removal, as represented by this motion, is an important and critical stance for the IASW, on behalf of Social Workers in Ireland, to take. The removal of 'Human Rights' from CORU's Code has implications for how we, as Social Workers, both individually and collectively, understand, frame and practice our profession, a profession which, we understand, at its heart, encompasses a fundamental commitment to 'Human Rights'. As Social Workers we pride ourselves in working democratically, in partnership and co-operatively, facilitating, advocating, and challenging. We now have a duty to challenge the removal of 'Human Rights' from the Code governing our profession, and we have a responsibility to campaign to ensure it is reinstated.

Given the global landscape dominated by increasing inequality, a worsening climate crisis and the Covid19 pandemic, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission maintain that *"it is more important than ever that we adhere to clear human rights and equality values in our deliberations and decision-making"*.

"Social Work bereft of the commitment to human rights is like a footballer who is no longer able to run and kick the ball" (Garrett, 2021).

Motion 6

Proposed by: Kate McCaffery **Seconded by:** Susan Doherty

The Working group looking at the role of social work with Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Services proposes that the members support the proposed Statement of Position.

Explanation: This statement of position and supporting documents are in draft form currently, however, we are aiming to have this work completed by the end of May/beginning of June and the working group are keen that statement be ratified and published by the board as soon as is possible. This statement is a first step in encouraging Irish social workers to consider the needs of TGNC service users and to identify, seek and become involved in these referrals.

The **draft** statement of position is as follows:

It is the position of IASW that Social Worker have essential roles, both to the individual and across wider society, in:

- taking an affirming clinical position which acknowledges the diversity of gender and provides unconditional positive regard for all gender identities and expressions – a position which honours and supports the integrity, diversity, and

worth of each service user, as well as the right of all individuals to live authentically.

- providing care and support to TGNC individuals across all health and social care services, so that they may fully participate in social, educational, occupational, and economic life.
- developing Transgender/ Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC)-specific competency in areas of particular relevance to TGNC service user's wellbeing, such as engagement, clinical assessment, support, and intervention
- delivering services and interventions to TGNC service users that are culturally competent, developmentally appropriate, and trans-affirmative which enrich individual, family, and collective wellbeing.
- engaging in advocacy activities to address barriers and inequalities that exist in organisations and society.
- upholding human rights and social justice, including support for TGNC service users based on that community's identified needs.
- developing, promoting, and implementing social policies aimed at promoting social justice and improving social conditions and equality for TGNC individuals, their families, groups, and communities.

It is the position of the IASW that social work services should be accessible to TGNC service users, regardless of their stage and type of transition, both as part of a specialised multi-disciplinary team and/or as part of a social work caseload in other TGNC non-specialist teams in in-patient and community-based services.