



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte  
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +  
Social Care Professionals

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# CORU Newsletter

Issue 2. Autumn 2012

## Welcome

Welcome to CORU's second newsletter. Please feel free to circulate the newsletter to your colleagues or contacts. The newsletters are also archived on [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie).

We've had a busy summer at CORU continuing to build the framework for the regulation of 12 health and social care professions. In particular, the Health and Social Care Professionals (Amendment) Bill, 2012 has been published and we have gone to **public consultation** on a draft bye-law that sets the criteria required for restoration to the register for social workers. Your feedback is important to us so please forward any comments in relation to the public consultation. You can also keep up to date on all developments at CORU by signing up for **updates** at [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie).

**Ginny Hanrahan, CORU Chief Executive.**

### Changes to CORU Legislation to Be Made

The **Health and Social Care Professionals (Amendment) Bill 2012** has just been published. It is expected that the Bill will come before the Houses of the Oireachtas for debate shortly. This Bill introduces amendments to the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 that are necessary for the effective functioning of Council and the Registration Boards for the individual professions.

The principal amendments relate to:

- The appointment of the professional nominees to Council
- Changes in registration criteria, including the power to allow Registration Boards to put in place a scheme for returners to practice and setting criteria for qualifying as an existing practitioner
- Further implementing the EU Directive for recognition of professional qualifications

### Public Consultation: Restoration to the Register for Social Workers

The **Social Workers Registration Board** has launched a **public consultation** on a bye-law setting out criteria for restoration to the register. Social workers may voluntarily come off the Register if they are not working in Ireland or they may be removed for failing to pay their annual retention fee by the due date.

The Social Workers Registration Board's goal is to protect the public by fostering high standards among the profession. We must ensure that we have robust application processes in place so that the public can have confidence in the social work profession.

You can contribute to the consultation in a number of ways – by filling in an online feedback form at [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie), by email or in writing. The closing date is 12 noon on 27 September 2012.

### Important Change to Registration Fees for Existing Social Worker Practitioners

**No need to wait, register now.**

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council has made an important change to the fees for **existing practitioners** who are availing of the grandparenting arrangements under Section 91 of the Act. Existing practitioners will be required to pay an application fee of €295 to process their registration. While they will have to complete an annual renewal form each year after registration they will not be required to pay a renewal fee until one year after the end of the grandparenting period.

This means that social workers applying in September 2012 for example, will not be required to pay a renewal fee until 31 May 2014.

By applying early, social workers can make sure they are not caught in a back log created by a rush of applications in the New Year. Practitioners are encouraged to take advantage of this new arrangement and send in their application to the Social Workers Registration Board as soon as possible. CORU would also like to remind you that the fees may be tax deductible based on an individual's assessment.

This fee arrangement will apply to each of the 12 professions to be regulated under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act.

For more information on how to **apply for registration** as a social worker please contact [registration@coru.ie](mailto:registration@coru.ie) or telephone the registration team at 01 2933160.

### Social Workers: 9 Months to go to the Close of Grandparenting

The grandparenting period for social workers ends on 31 May 2013 and any social worker who wants to continue to use the title of social worker must have applied for registration before then.

Begin the **application process** now so that you can be certain you meet the deadline.

**There are three steps to complete your application:**

1. Complete the application form and garda vetting form
2. Submit your supporting certified documents
3. Pay the required fee

To avoid any delay in processing your application, please make sure you have completed these three steps. If we can help in any way or if you need any information on our registration processes, our registration team will be happy to assist.

#### We are here to help!

We understand that many of you have queries and concerns about the **registration process**.

We would be happy to come along to your team or group events to help you in your preparation for registration.

If you have an event that might be suitable for us to attend please contact [communications@coru.ie](mailto:communications@coru.ie) or telephone 01 2933160.

#### Did you know?

CORU is Ireland's first multi-professional regulator.

We will be regulating social workers, clinical biochemists, dietitians, medical scientists, occupational therapists, orthoptists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, psychologists, radiographers, social care workers, and speech and language therapists.

Registration provides a recognition of professional standing and international recognition and verification of education and qualifications. It gives guidance to registrants through codes of professional conduct and ethics which are established in consultation with the professions. It also protects the reputation of the profession through the establishment of a complaints mechanism and a fitness to practise model.

### Fitness to Practise Update

There is a lot of interest in the introduction of Fitness to Practise among health and social care professionals. While Fitness to Practise has not yet been introduced, we thought it might be helpful to explain what our approach to Fitness to Practise will be.

Fitness to Practise is first and foremost about protecting the public. It is about finding out if a registrant is unfit to practise and, if he or she is unfit, applying the appropriate measures to resolve the situation. When a registrant who is unfit to practise in their profession continues to practise, they put the safety of the public and the reputation of their profession at risk.

#### What happens when a complaint is made?

When a complaint is received, it will be examined by the Preliminary Proceedings Committee (PPC). A registrant will be informed of any complaints we receive and will have the opportunity to make submissions to the PPC in answer to the complaint.

The PPC will decide if the complaint warrants further action or if the matter is trivial, vexatious, without substance or made in bad faith.

If a complaint warrants further action, and it goes to hearing before a Professional Conduct Committee or a Health Committee, the registrant is entitled to attend the hearing and be represented if he or she so wishes.

If, after a hearing, it is found that there is an impairment to practise and CORU wishes to attach conditions, suspend or cancel a registration, the registrant will have the right to apply to the High Court to challenge the decision of CORU.

### Social Workers: Have you read your Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics?

Health and social care professionals are committed practitioners delivering care to members of the public throughout Ireland. The provision of a framework which supports you in your daily work is central to good regulation.

The **Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers** provides the standards of conduct, performance and ethics which individual registrants should apply during the course of their work. To assist you, the Code contains a "Guide to Ethical Decision Making" for those occasions when you have to make difficult decisions in your work.

### Are your contact details up to date?

From time to time we may need to send you important correspondence about your registration.

Please let us know if your contact details have changed by contacting 01 2933160 or emailing [registration@coru.ie](mailto:registration@coru.ie)

### Election Update

The **Social Workers Registration Board** held its first election in June. Our congratulations to Declan Carey on his appointment and we wish him every success as a board member.

## Annual Report

CORU has published its **2011 Annual Report & Financial Statements**. This report gives an overview of the progress made by CORU in 2011 in developing a system of regulation for the 12 health and social care professions.

#### Our 2011 highlights include:

- The Social Worker's Register opened on 31 May 2011
- Three bye-laws became effective in March 2011, relating to social workers:
  - Approved qualifications
  - Applications for Registration
  - Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics
- The National Social Work Qualifications Board was dissolved and its staff, properties and liabilities transferred to CORU
- The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) became the Competent Authority for Social Work in the Republic of Ireland under EU Directive 2005/36/EC
- Traffic on CORU's website increased six-fold

## Dr Jason Last - Chairperson Profile

Dr Jason Last is the first Chairman of the **Radiographers Registration Board** and is working with his fellow board members to put in place the foundations for the regulation of Radiographers.

Jason qualified in medicine from UCD in 1996 and began surgical training. He became an Associate Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland before returning to academia to pursue research and education within UCD School of Medicine & Medical Science.

Over the past 5 years, Jason has taken on positions of increasing responsibility within the University including the Director of Preclinical Education and Director of the new UCD Graduate Entry to Medicine Programme. More recently, he was appointed to the position of Associate Dean and Director of Educational Innovation with the School. Jason continues to practise medicine on a part-time basis and has an interest in community-based practice. As a Senior Lecturer in Clinical Anatomy, he is heavily involved in the education of doctors and radiographers.

Jason believes the Radiographers Registration Board has “a significant and heavy responsibility. Radiographers already have a robust professional ethos and a committed professional body. As has happened in the UK and other similar jurisdictions, the time has come for all allied health professions to become State registered and through that process declare their dedication and commitment to the protection of the public as they carry out their professional duties”.

As Chairperson Jason plays a vital role alongside other voluntary board members in ensuring that the Radiographers Registration Board adheres to its statutory duties, ensuring that the mission of CORU is kept central to its work and maintaining a spirit of positive collaboration.



Dr Jason Last - Chairperson of the Radiographers Registration Board

## News Bites

### Current Vacancies on the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and Social Workers Registration Board

The Minister for Health, invited expressions of interest from people who wish to be appointed to vacancies for lay members on the **Health and Social Care Professionals Council** and members of the **Social Workers Registration Board**. The Department of Health are currently progressing recommendations to the Minister.

New members to the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and to the Registration Boards will play an important role in protecting the public by contributing to decision making on the regulation of the profession.

## Update on New Registration Boards

The Minister for Health invited expressions of interest from suitable people interested in being appointed to the Dietitians Registration Board, Occupational Therapists Registration Board and the Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board.

The closing date for these applications was 27 July for Speech and Language Therapists and 16 August 2012 for Occupational Therapists and Dietitians. Details on the appointment of these Registration Boards will be available on our **website** when they are established by the Minister.

Expressions of interest will be sought in due course for the Physiotherapists Registration Board through **[www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie)**.

## Overview of Education and Training Programmes - Approval and Monitoring Process

A key function of a **Registration Board** at CORU is to approve education and training programs for the purposes of registration and to also monitor their continuing suitability.

On application by an institution for approval, a Registration Board will review the programme to make sure:

- it meets or continues to meet the criteria set for approval for that profession
- those graduates who successfully complete the programme are able to meet the standards of proficiency for registration in their profession

Following 'approval', of an education and training programme, the qualification arising from that programme is then included in the approved qualifications bye-law as attesting to the standards of proficiency required for registration.

Graduates of a programme will then be eligible to apply to join the register through the approved qualification application route.

Once a programme is approved it is subject to a review and monitoring cycle whereby the Registration Board satisfies itself in relation to the continuing suitability of an education and training programme in the areas of education, training, assessment, examinations and the practice education provided in the programme.

### Social Workers

New graduates in social work who have an approved qualification can apply for registration via the approved qualification route. A list of **approved qualifications** for social workers is available at [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie).

For further information please contact [education@coru.ie](mailto:education@coru.ie)

### Grandparenting and the Assessment of Professional Competence

Grandparenting is the name given to the two year transition period following the opening of the Register to allow existing practitioners to apply for registration.

During this period, the assessment of professional competence is a means by which a practitioner who has been in practice, but who does not hold an **approved, Schedule 3** or sufficiently relevant qualification, can still apply for registration if they successfully complete an assessment of professional competence. The Registration Board for each profession develops the assessment criteria for their profession.

The assessment of professional competence for social workers has two parts to include a written submission and an interview. In order to be eligible to apply you must have been engaged in the practice of the profession. This means that you should have at least 1000 hours of practice of social work in the five years up to 31 May 2011 and 350 of these hours should be in one full-time block.

For further information on assessment of professional competence please contact [education@coru.ie](mailto:education@coru.ie) or telephone the education team on 01 2933160.

## We want to hear from you!

Your feedback will help shape how Ireland's health and social care professions are regulated. Let us know what you think.

Please get in touch by emailing [info@coru.ie](mailto:info@coru.ie) or telephone 01 2933160.





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