



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health + Social Care Professionals

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- Registration: your questions answered
- Important fee changes may apply to you

# CORU Newsletter

Issue 3. Winter 2012.



## A new era in health and social care

**Tom Jordan  
Chairperson**

2012 has been a busy year for CORU.

Work is progressing on the development of a framework for the regulation of the twelve health and social care professions designated under the [Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005](#).

[Registration applications](#) from social workers are being processed and we expect a further three boards will be announced by Minister Reilly before year end which meets our 2012 target.

In 2013 we will be working towards a further five boards and the commencement of fitness to practise.

I would like to thank the members of Council, the [Social Workers Registration Board](#) and [Radiographers Registration Board](#) for their outstanding commitment in 2012.

I particularly wish to thank the employees of CORU for their dedication and contribution.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Suzanne Quin well having completed her term of office as Chairperson of the Social Workers Registration Board and to thank her for her support and commitment.

I very much look forward to working with the new Chairperson of the board, Valentine O'Kelly.

We look forward to a very busy and productive year ahead as we enter a new era in health and social care in Ireland.

I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and the very best for 2013 from all at CORU.

**Tom Jordan - Chairperson,  
Health and Social Care Professionals  
Council.**

### Social workers reminder: registration deadline is 31 May 2013

An important change has been made to the payment of the registration fee which applies to practitioners engaged in the practice of social work in the 5 years up to the date of the opening of the **Register (31 May 2011)**.

Existing practitioners will pay an application fee of €295 to process their registration and they will not be required to pay a renewal fee until one year after the end of the **grandparenting** period which runs from 31 May 2011 to 31 May 2013.

If you qualify for this change in fees, these are the steps you must take to get registered:

- Complete an **application form** and pay €295 fee.
- Complete an annual renewal form on 31 May 2013 and no fee payable. This means you are registered until 31 May 2014.

**Registration** is renewed on an annual basis and fees may be tax deductible based on an individual's assessment.

**Remember, as a social worker you must have applied for registration before 31 May 2013.** Social workers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to avoid being caught up in any back log of applications which might delay registration.

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

This change in fees will apply to the **twelve professions** to be regulated under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.

### Grandparenting is.....

the name given to the two year transitional period following the opening of the Register to allow existing practitioners time to register.

### Search the register

CORU has launched a "search the register" facility which is now available on the website. This means that the public and employers can check that a health and social care professional is registered.

Currently the register can only be searched for social workers who have been registered.

### Registrants - Update your details online

From time to time we may need to send you important information about your registration. This means that having your contact details up to date is very important.

Registrants can now confirm and update their personal and employment details online by logging onto [CORU's homepage](http://CORU's homepage).

Existing registrants should have received log on details in the post. Please email [registration@coru.ie](mailto:registration@coru.ie) if you have not received your details.

Further online system developments are also underway.

## Thank you to Suzanne Quin

Thank you to Suzanne Quin, for her hard work and dedication in her role as the first Chairperson of the **Social Workers Registration Board** whose term of office expired in September 2012.

Suzanne has played a vital role as Chairperson in the development of a regulatory system for social workers. Her contribution has been significant and she will continue to contribute to the work of the Social Workers Registration Board in her role as a board member.

Valentine O'Kelly was elected as the new Chairperson for the Social Workers Registration Board on 12 October 2012, Val's profile can be read on Page 5.

### Criteria for restoration to the Register

The Social Workers Registration Board's goal is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of the social work profession.

The Board must have robust registration processes in place so that the public can have confidence in the social work profession.

**In August, the board consulted with members of the profession and other interested parties on a draft bye-law governing the criteria for restoration to the Social Workers Register for a person who has come off the register.**

A person can;

- 1) voluntarily have their name removed from the Register or;
- 2) be removed for non-payment of the annual retention fee (€295.00) within the required time limits.

Views were sought on the steps a person must take in order to have their name restored to the Register.

Following consideration of the consultation responses, the [Social Workers Registration Board](#) with the approval of Council made the [bye-law](#). The full [consultation report](#) and further information on [restoration](#) to the Register is available on our website.

### Recent events

CORU recently attended the following events to talk to professionals about registration:

- 16th Annual Conference of the Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy, Dublin.
- Social Care Workers Professional Accountability Symposium, Enniscorthy.
- Annual Conference of Local Authority Social Workers and Welfare Officers, Monaghan.
- Numerous social work team meetings and group events.

## Changes to our legislation – Health and Social Care Professionals Amendment Bill 2012

A Bill amending our legislation governing the regulation of the twelve health and social care professions under CORU's remit (the [Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005](#)) is currently going through the Houses of the Oireachtas. This is a technical Bill, aimed at making the functioning of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council more effective.

The Bill allows for the Minister for Health to continue to appoint members to the Council until the Registration Boards for the [twelve professions](#) have been appointed and have opened their registers.

The Bill also allows for the assessment and recognition of non-Irish qualifications which are outside the scope of the EU's Professional Qualifications Directive and it will also enable [Registration Boards](#) to register professionals who are returning to practice. If you would like to read the [Bill](#) please visit our website.

### We are here to help

We understand that many of you have queries about the [registration process](#).

CORU would be happy to attend your team or group event to help you prepare for registration.

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

### Which Register are open?

Currently the Social Workers Register is open which means you can apply for registration as a social worker.

### Fitness to practise

#### When will fitness to practise begin for CORU?

CORU is working to introduce fitness to practise for its registrants at the earliest possible opportunity. Our fitness to practise system is set out in the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 ("our Act").

One of the requirements of our Act is that there must be at least two registrants on a fitness to practise committee - one from the same profession as the registrant complained of and one registrant from a different profession. So CORU must have two registers open which we anticipate will happen in early 2013.

When two registers are open we will begin to recruit and train registrants and representatives of the public to sit on these committees and we hope to begin fitness to practise in the final quarter of 2013. Once fitness to practise begins, it will be possible for CORU to receive a complaint about a registrant.

CORU will not be able to deal with complaints about matters occurring before fitness to practise is introduced. However, we are still concerned with matters that occurred in the past and it is important that registrants provide all information to CORU when applying for registration.

Applicants must satisfy CORU that they are a "fit and proper person". Failure to give CORU relevant and accurate information could affect a person's registration. So when registering, an applicant should inform CORU about fitness to practise issues which have occurred in the past.

CORU will be informing the public and registrants throughout 2013 about their roles in our fitness to practise system, how our system will operate and what it seeks to achieve.

### CPD and registration

Health and social care professionals have a duty to ensure that their knowledge, skills and performance are of a high quality, up to date and relevant to their practice.

This continued professional development (CPD) is part of a practitioner's professionalism.

CPD is also a part of a registrant's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

Each registration board will provide guidance to its registrants on its CPD requirements for registration.

CORU are currently developing a CPD model for registration. It will only become a requirement of registration when the two year grandparenting period has expired.

We intend to consult with the professions and other stakeholders at a number of stages during this project.

We will be in touch with registrants to provide information to support them in meeting their CPD requirements.

### Information for service users

A website has been set up to provide patients and service users with an information portal on how to raise a concern or give feedback about a health or social care service or professional in Ireland. Please visit [www.healthcomplaints.ie](http://www.healthcomplaints.ie) for further information on this initiative.

CORU cannot deal with any complaints or concerns about its registrants until fitness to practise is introduced. Please sign up for [updates](#) on our website for developments in this area.

**Sign up for updates on [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie)**

### New Social Workers Registration Board Chairperson appointed

Valentine O’Kelly has been appointed Chairperson of the Social Workers Registration Board, replacing Suzanne Quin whose term of office expired in September.

Ms O’ Kelly, who was appointed to the Social Workers Registration Board in August 2010, will Chair the Board for two years as it continues to develop a robust system of regulation for the social work profession.

According to Ms O’Kelly **“I am delighted to be the Chair of a committed board at a pivotal time in the professional development of social workers. I am confident that the work we are undertaking will protect the public and enhance the status of social work as a profession”**.

“A solid foundation for the regulation of the profession has been built over the last two years and I now look forward to the consolidation of this by the full implementation of the legislation resulting in a strong regulatory framework for the profession and the protection of the public. In particular, I look forward to the completion of work already commenced on the introduction of ‘fitness to practise’ for the social work profession”.

Ms O’Kelly encouraged social workers to register without delay; **“The end of the grandparenting period is fast approaching. As all social workers know, they must have submitted a complete application for registration to CORU by 31 May 2013. I urge social workers to begin the application process now to ensure there are no delays in getting onto the register”**.

“After the end of the grandparenting period, social workers will not be able to continue to work using the protected title ‘Social Worker’ unless they have applied to be registered”. This will have implications for employers of social workers.

Ms O’Kelly, a native of Fermanagh, is a qualified social worker, with a Bachelor of Social Science from UCD and a Diploma in Applied Social Studies. She also holds a Post Qualifying Advanced Diploma in Child Protection and Welfare from TCD.

Ms O’Kelly spent her professional life working with the North Western Health Board first as a social worker, principal social worker and as a child care manager. She is involved extensively in the voluntary sector locally in the areas of community development, child care, child protection and community education.

### New registration due to be appointed

The Minister for Health, James Reilly will shortly appoint the Occupational Therapists Registration Board, the Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board and the Dietitians Registration Board.

These boards will be responsible for establishing the statutory Register for their profession.

Before each Register can be opened, the boards will make a number of bye-laws dealing with the approval of educational qualifications, application requirements for registration and they will also develop a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

Public consultations will be held by each of the boards during 2013. Keep an eye on [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie) for further updates.



Valentine O’Kelly, Chairperson, Social Workers Registration Board

## Why regulation matters

**Ginny Hanrahan writes about why she believes that the regulation of social workers is critically important.**

The role of social work in Ireland has expanded considerably in the last 30 years with the social worker now being a core member of multidisciplinary teams in most care settings. Social workers also play a leading role in child protection and welfare services. Fundamental to the professional practice of social workers is ethical awareness. Social work developed out of humanitarian and democratic concern, and its values are based on respect for the dignity, equality and worth of all people.

Social workers have unsupervised access to children and vulnerable people and they must have a thorough grounding in the relevant law, social justice and be able to develop and build co-operative relationships with people and their families, often in difficult circumstances where their involvement might not be welcome. As a society we place a great deal of trust in social workers and we must have confidence that they can intervene appropriately and judiciously in difficult situations.

The vast majority of social workers in Ireland are doing a good job supporting the most vulnerable and distressed people in our society. Their role is crucial and their commitment and dedication to their profession is admirable, working as they do in a climate of constraints/limited resources and organizational change similar to all working in health and social care. Indeed, although it reported a litany of failures, the Independent Child Death Review Group also highlighted many examples of good practice by social workers.

The Government has committed to a reform of the State's support for families. During the summer, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs gave details of the new Child and Family Support Agency which, from January next, will assume responsibility for the protection of children.

As the Registrar for social workers, my view is that regulation of social workers is a central part of this reform.

Similar to the Medical Council and An Bord Altranais; we at CORU have put in place a framework to regulate the 12 professions who come under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in order to protect the public. This is achieved through fostering high standards of professional conduct, professional education, training and competence among those registered. This is a positive development for the profession.

**The publication of a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics** provides a helpful professional framework for social workers and will support them in ethical decision-making.

Inquiries into conduct and/or competence are, of course, the most publically visible face of regulation. Once that part of the Act is commenced by the Minister for Health, social workers registered with CORU may be subject to fitness to practise, as will the other regulated health and social care professions, as their registers open; ensuring that those who are not competent will be appropriately sanctioned.

Every profession has people who do not perform as they should and for the public to have confidence there must be a mechanism for the appropriate handling of these situations.

**We live in a society where trust and confidence in a profession is entirely dependent on accountability through regulation.** While many of us will never have cause to interact with a social worker, those who do, the service users of the social workers, are entitled to know that the profession is regulated.

You can read the full article on [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie)



Ginny Hanrahan, CEO  
Health and Social Care Professionals Council

## Registration: your questions answered

### When should I apply for Registration?

Social workers must **apply** for registration by 31 May 2013. It is important that you take care to submit a complete application. The **application** form is easy to follow and gathering the necessary documents in advance will minimise the time taken to complete.

### What am I asked on the application form?

**Personal details:** fill out your personal details including your name and contact details.

**Qualifications:** give details of your qualifications.

**Career history and proof of practice:** give details of your career and practice as a social worker.

**Fit and proper declaration:** answer a number of questions about your health and character.

**Statutory Declaration:** sign a statutory declaration in the presence of a Solicitor with a Practising Certificate, Commissioner for Oaths, Peace Commissioner or a Notary Public.

**Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers:** verify that you have read, understand and agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

**Garda vetting:** You must also contact CORU for a Garda vetting application form and return the completed form to our office with your registration application. Garda vetting can take up to 12 weeks.

### What documents do I need?

You can make **applying** simpler by having the following documents ready to submit with your application:

1. Certified copies of your qualification(s)
2. Completed and signed statutory declaration
3. Completed and signed Garda vetting form
4. Certified copy of your passport
5. Certified copy of your birth certificate, adoption certificate or other evidence of place of birth
6. Certified evidence of any change of name (if applicable)
7. Proof of practice declaration signed by your employer
8. Two certified passport sized photographs

If you are self-employed or if you have lived abroad for 6 months or more, additional information is required such as police clearance or a certificate of good standing.

### If I pay the fee now, when will I have to pay again?

If you apply now you must pay a €295 application fee. Then in May 2013 no fee is paid but you must fill out a short annual renewal form. From 31 May 2014 - €295 will be due annually with your registration renewal.

Please contact the registration team with any queries on 01 2933160 or [registration@coru.ie](mailto:registration@coru.ie).

# Season's Greetings

## From all at CORU

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council





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agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +  
Social Care Professionals



# Social Workers

Have you  
applied for  
registration?

\*This applies to practitioners engaged in the practice of Social Work in the 5 years up to the date of opening of the Social Workers Register (31 May 2011).

Social Workers must apply for registration before 31 May 2013.

More information can be found on [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie) by emailing [registration@coru.ie](mailto:registration@coru.ie) or calling 01 2933160.

**Don't wait -  
Register Now!**

No renewal  
fee due until  
**May 2014\***