



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Public Consultation Report

Election of Members for Appointment to Social Workers
Registration Board Bye-law 2012

May 2012

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About the Social Workers Registration Board

The Social Workers Registration Board has statutory responsibility for the registration of members of the profession; approval and monitoring of education and training programmes; establishing the code of professional conduct and ethics and standards of performance to which social workers must adhere and recognition of qualifications gained outside the State.

It is the first of twelve Boards to be established at CORU, the umbrella body for the regulation of 12 health and social care professions.

The Public Consultation Process

Background

The term of office for six members of the Social Workers Registration Board will expire on 4 August 2012. Three of these vacancies will be filled by election and the remaining three will be filled by the Minister for Health.

The Board is required by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 to make a bye-law to set out the conduct of elections for the appointment of members to the Board and, in April 2012, CORU launched a public consultation seeking the views of the public, the professions and other interested parties on the bye-law before its final approval by the Board.

Publicising the Consultation Process

A number of channels were used to publicise the consultation process and invite the submission of observations. These included:

- An advertisement was placed in the Irish Independent on Thursday 5 April 2012 (see appendix one).
- A press release was issued to the following medical publications: Irish Medical News, Irish Medical Times, Medical Independent and Health Matters. See appendix two for a copy of the press release issued.
- An online survey was developed and the link, along with an explanation of the consultation, was emailed to all registered social workers. The email was also sent to a targeted list of over 700 stakeholders, including the Professional Bodies, Trade Unions, educators and other interested parties who have previously corresponded with CORU.
- Information on the consultation along with a link to the online feedback form was hosted on the CORU website.

People were invited to participate in the consultation process in a number of ways:

- They could ring CORU to request a copy of the draft bye-law and to offer feedback.
- They could visit CORU's office to view the draft bye-law and give their feedback in person.
- They could visit www.coru.ie and choose to complete an online feedback form, to print a copy of the form and post it, or email it to CORU.
- They could email submissions to consultation@coru.ie.

Overview of Responses to Consultation

17 responses were received to the public consultation.

Email	1
Telephone	0
Online feedback form	16
Post	0

Online Feedback Form

Respondents were asked to identify if they were offering feedback on their own behalf or on behalf of an organisation.

Individual	15
Professional Organisation	1
Unknown	0

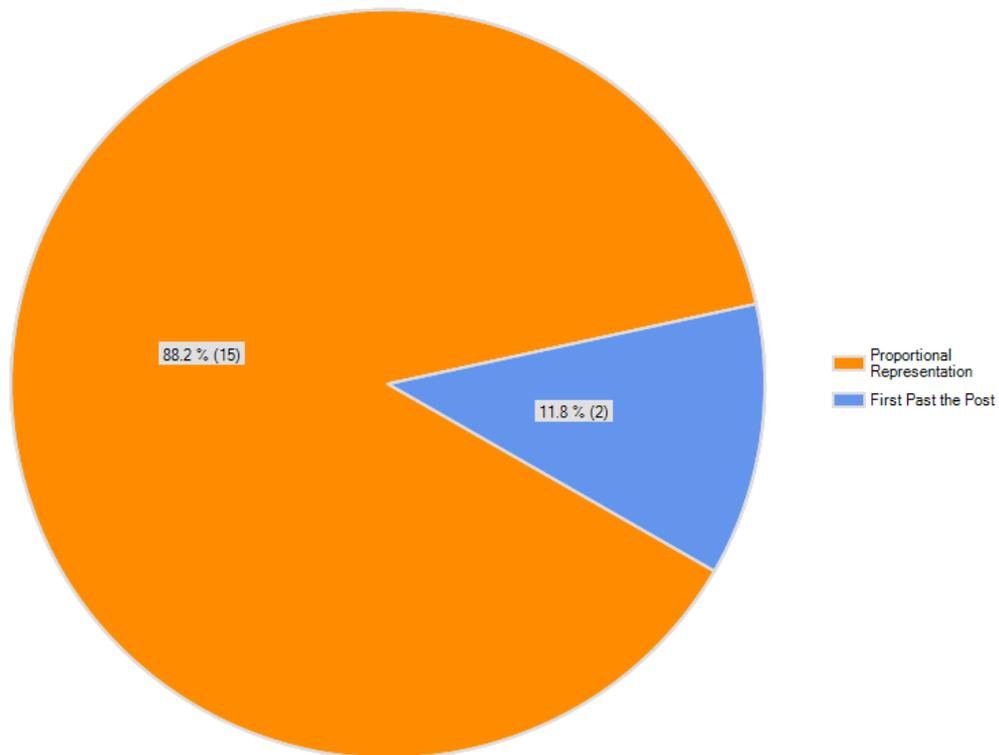
Questions asked and overview of responses received

Question 1:

The Bye-Law proposes that the electoral system is proportional representation by the single transferable vote.

If you were to chose an electoral system would it be Proportional Representation?

Response:



The majority of respondents (88.2%) opted for Proportional Representation as the electoral system.

One comment referred to the familiarity that people already have of the Proportional Representation system as being beneficial. Another referred to the greater representation afforded by this electoral system.

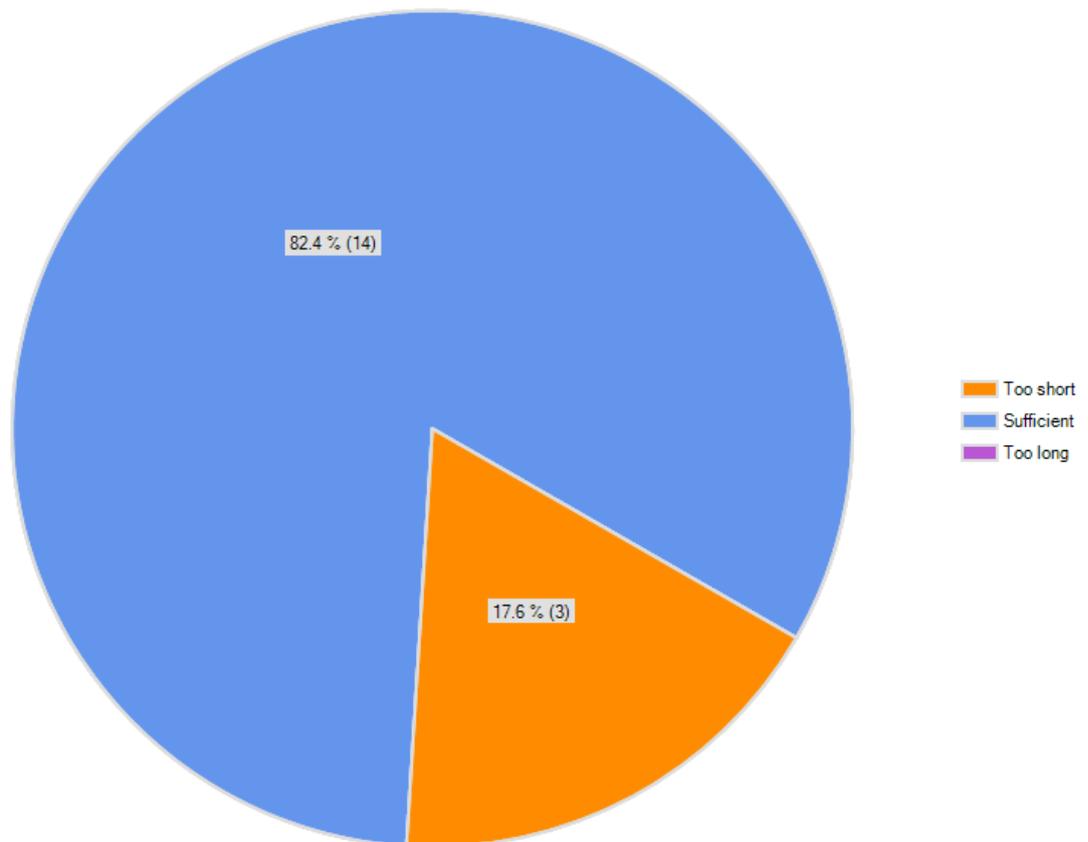
CORU response: No amendment necessary

Question 2:

The Bye-Law proposes that at least 56 days before the expiry of the current members term of office, notice will be given of the holding of the election.

Do you believe that the notice period is Too Short, Sufficient or Too Long. If you believe that an alternative notice period should be used, please say what the notice period should be. Please also provide any other comments on the notice period.

Response:



The majority of respondents (82.4%) answered that 56 days is a sufficient notice period.

Of those that felt that the period was too short, two commented that three months would be a preferable notice period.

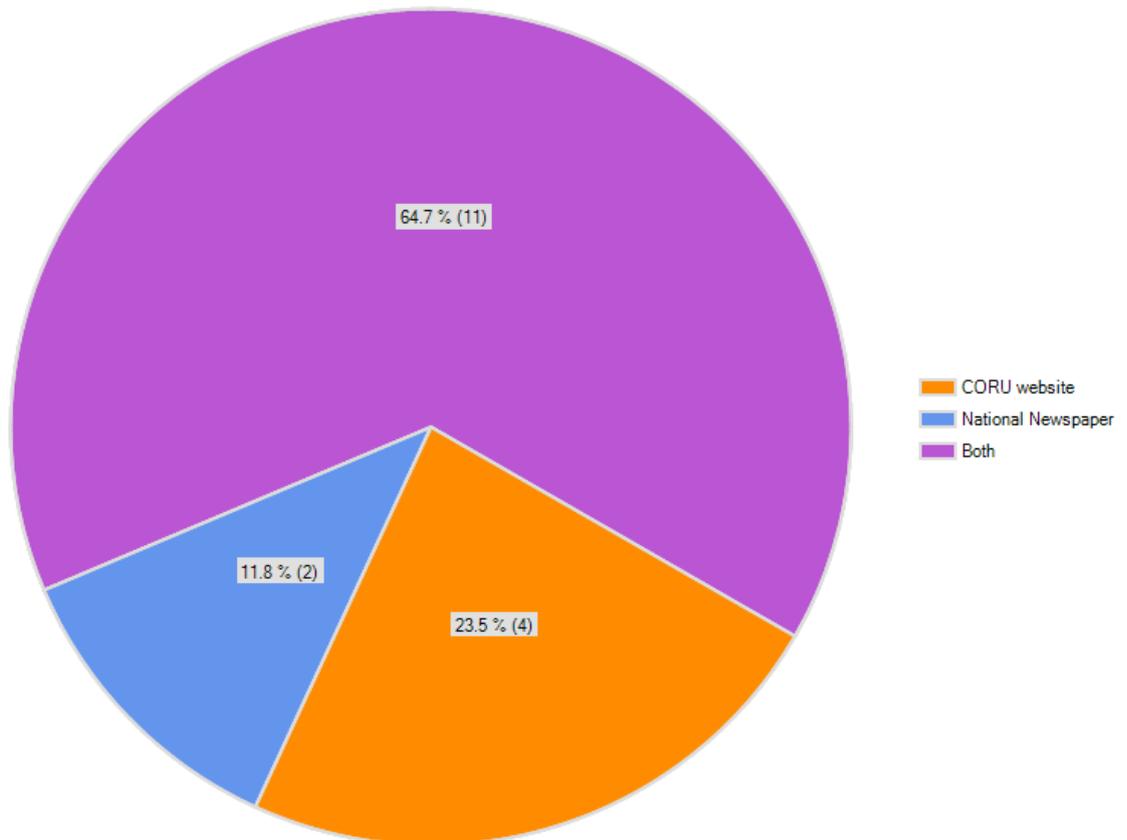
CORU response: The bye-law provides for a minimum notice of 56 days. This allows the returning officer discretion to give longer notice. As the bye-law is scheduled to be made on the 30 May 2012, 3 months notice in advance of the members' terms of office expiring is not possible for the 2012 election.

Question 3:

It is proposed that the notice of the election will be published on the CORU website.

Do you think that the notice should be published on the CORU website, in a National Newspaper or Both?

Response:



The majority of respondents (68.8%) felt that it would be appropriate that the notice of election be published in a national newspaper and on the CORU website.

Some comments referred to the value of advertising on the website of the professional bodies and to making direct contact with the professional bodies.

Another referred to the importance of emailing people directly because so many could miss seeing the notice on the CORU website.

CORU Response: The draft bye-law gave the Returning Officer discretion to determine the means of publication of the notice of election. The bye-law has been amended to require publication in one national newspaper and on our website.

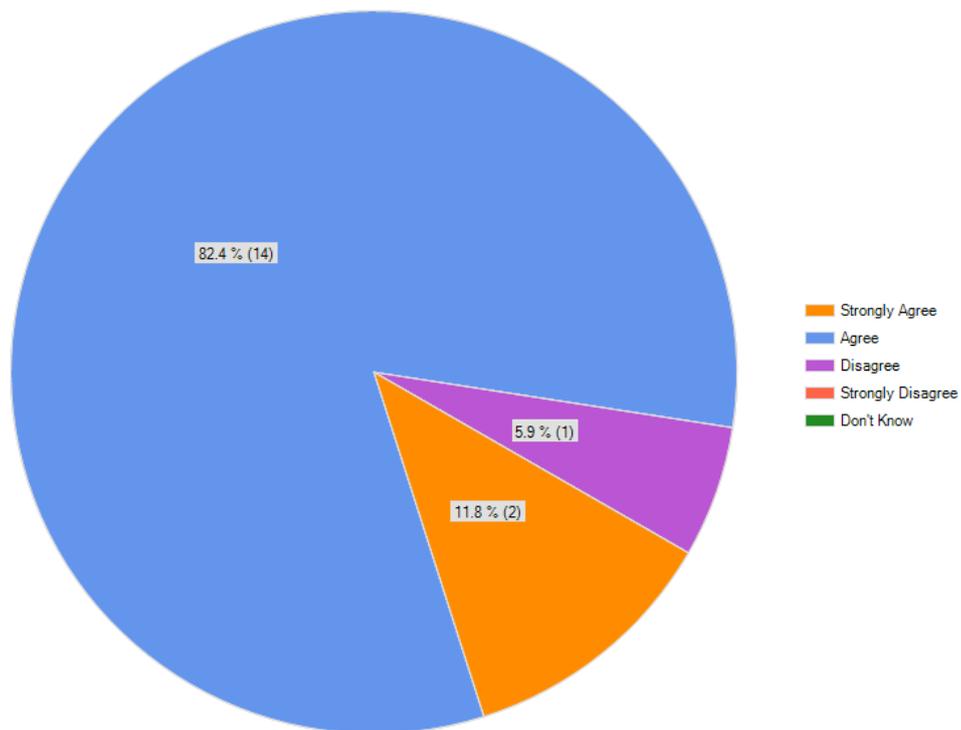
Question 4:

The Bye-Law proposes that in order to be eligible for election for appointment to a Registration Board the person must among other things:

- a) be registered with the Registration Board for the designated profession on the day that the electoral register is established;*
- b) have been proposed by one registrant, and supported by a further four registrants of the profession in writing;*
- c) submit a signed declaration confirming his or her eligibility to be nominated in the chosen category;*
- d) submit a signed declaration confirming that if he or she is elected there is not reason for the Minister to remove that person as a member of a registration board.*

*Do you agree that the proposed nominations process is appropriate?
Respondents were asked to say if they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or don't know.*

Response:



A majority of candidates (82.4%) agreed that the proposed nominations process is appropriate.

One respondent suggested that the proposer and 4 registrants should be able to email their support to CORU for a candidate.

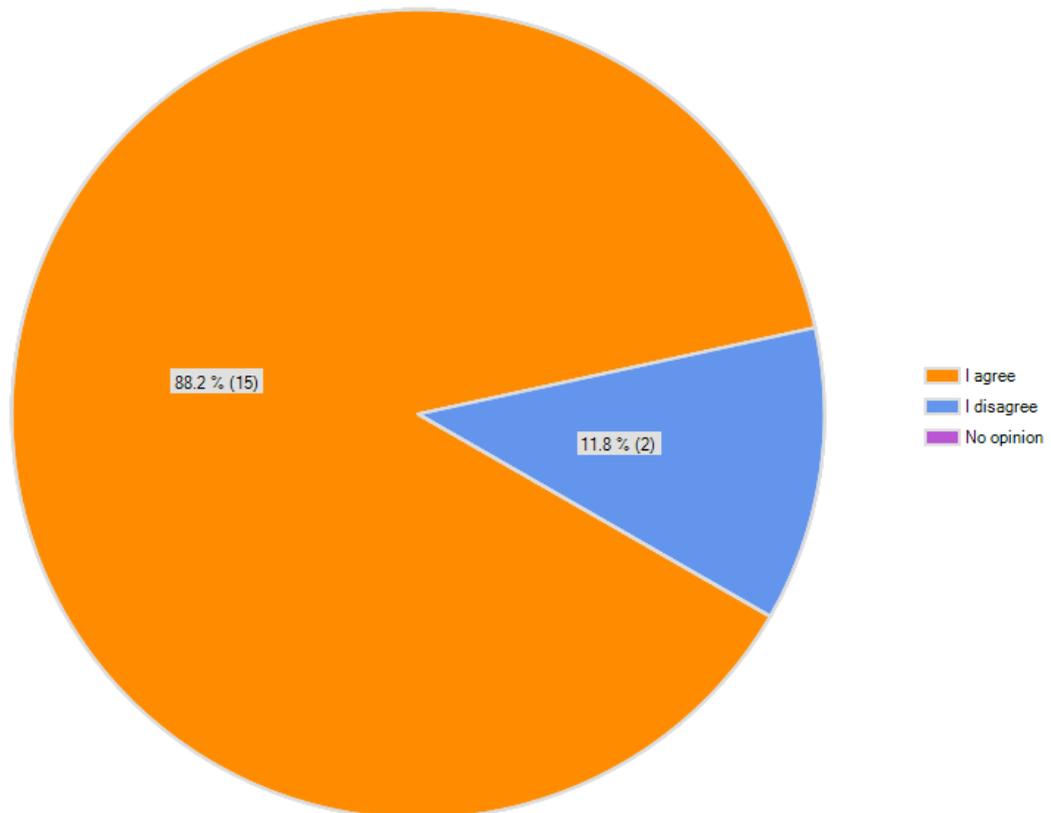
CORU Response: The bye-law clearly sets out the procedure for nominating a person as a candidate. These requirements are necessary to preserve the integrity of the election process.

Question 5:

It is proposed that the names of the proposers and supporters of a candidate will be printed on the notice confirming the candidates validly nominated for election.

Do you agree that the names of the proposer and 4 supporters should be published? Respondents were asked if they agreed, disagreed or had no opinion.

Response:



A majority of respondents (88.2%) agreed that the names of the proposer and four supporters should be published.

One respondent was concerned that some people would be discouraged from nominating if their names were to be published. Another respondent asked why this was relevant stating that there was no history of such a provision in other similar elections.

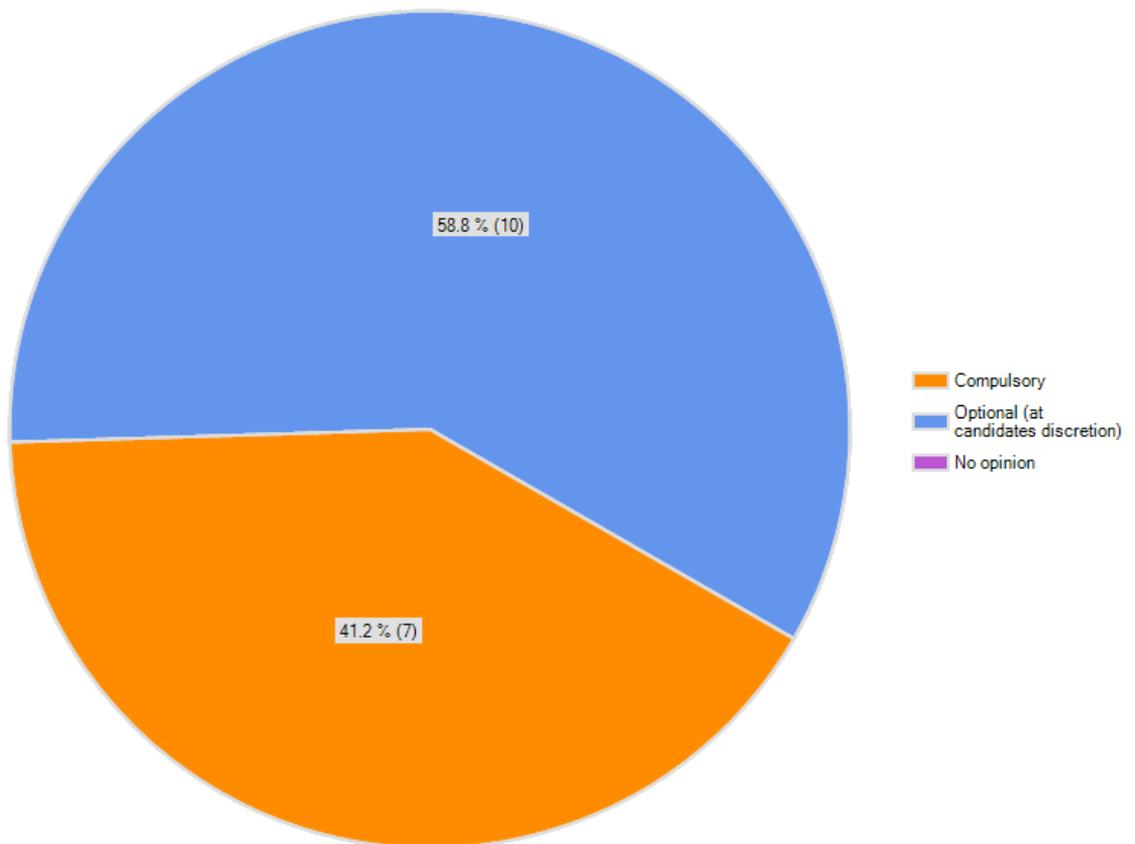
CORU response: No amendment proposed to the draft bye-law.

Question 6:

It is proposed that candidates will have the option to have his/her photograph included on the ballot paper

Do you believe that photographs on ballot papers should be compulsory, optional or have no opinion?

Response:



A majority of respondents (58.8%) felt that photographs should only be included on the ballot paper at the candidate's discretion.

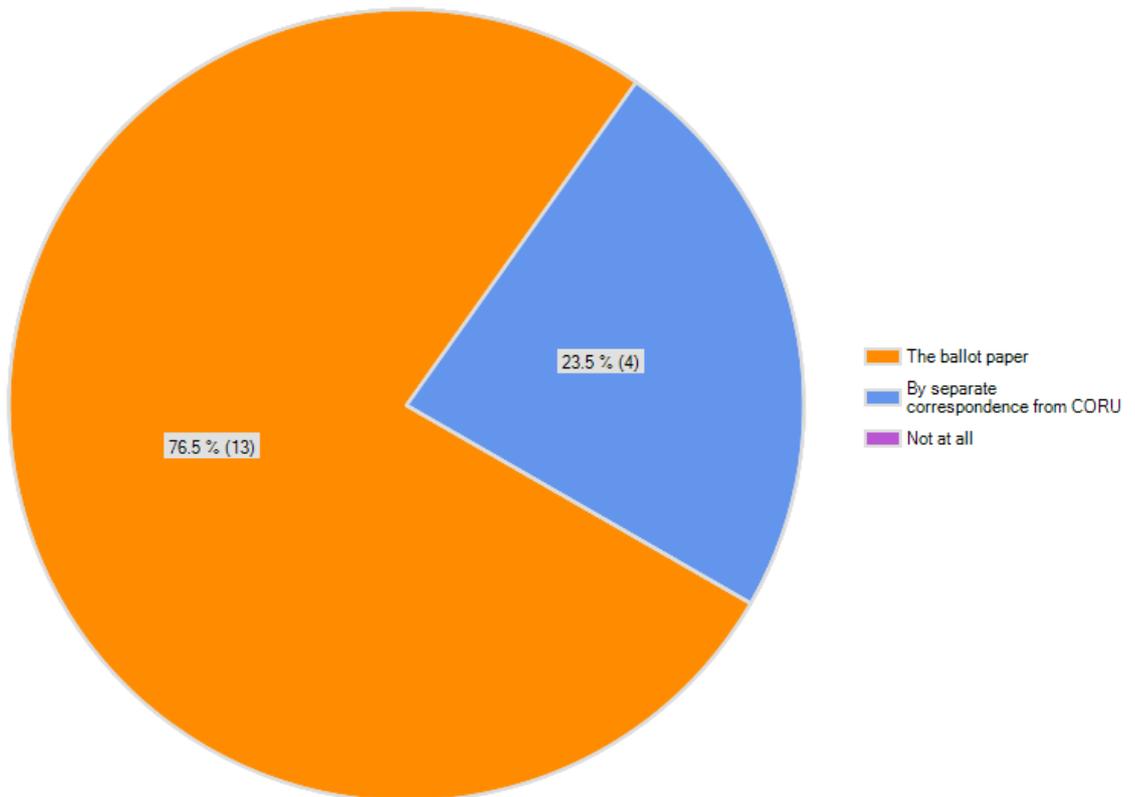
CORU Response: no amendment proposed to the draft bye-law.

Question 7:

CORU is considering how best to provide canvassing information provided by candidates. It is proposed that canvassing material, limited to 300 words would be circulated by CORU on behalf of candidates. The register of electors will not contain registrants personal details including postal addresses.

Would you like to receive canvassing information on candidates with the ballot paper, by separate correspondence from CORU or not at all?

Response:



The majority of respondents (76.5%) said that they would prefer to receive canvassing information along with the ballot paper.

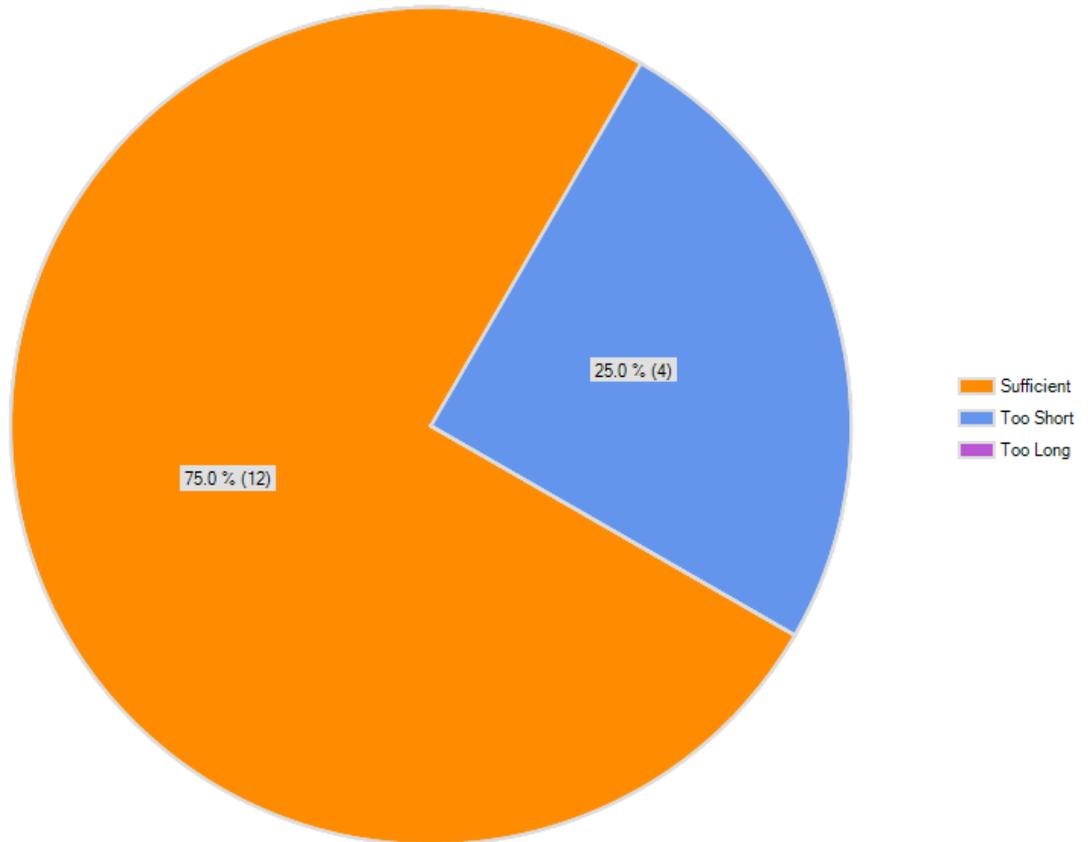
One respondent said that it would be fairer and more equitable if all information was distributed along with the ballot paper.

CORU Response: This is not included in the bye-law. The responses received will be considered in the development of policy on the circulation of canvassing materials. It is proposed that material will be circulated once only with the ballot paper(s).

Question 8:

It is proposed that ballot papers must be returned within 14 days. Do you feel that a 14 day period is sufficient, too short or too long?

Response:



The majority of respondents (75%) felt that 14 days was a sufficient time period within which to have to return the ballot paper. One respondent did not answer the question.

Of those who believed that 14 days was too short a period within which to return the ballot paper, the concerns related to people on annual leave, sick leave and maternity leave.

CORU Response: 14 days is considered a sufficient time period within which to return the ballot paper.

Question 9:

It is proposed that the Social Workers Registration Board will appoint two scrutineers whose duty will be to monitor the process for determining the validity of nominations and that the counting of votes is carried out in accordance with the bye-law and in an honest, fair and accurate manner.

Please provide any comments on the role of the scrutineers

Consultation Response:

Respondents did not make any comments on the role of the scrutineers.

Respondents suggested that:

- The selection of the scrutineers should be transparent and public.
- There should be no vested interest and objective insofar as possible.
- The role of the scrutineers is to monitor and to give feedback re quality assurance issues.
- The scrutineers must not be social workers to ensure independence in the function.
- The scrutineers should be totally independent of CORU and the registration process.
- If checking for validity you may want to insist that at least one of the scrutineers is a member of the board.
- Some guidelines would be advisable e.g. it would not be appropriate for a person who proposed any candidate to be a scrutineer.
- Recommendation that the scrutineer would have to sign a declaration form indicating that he/she has no vested interest in any of the nominees/that there is no conflict of interest.

Two respondents asked questions:

- What will be the qualifications or profession of the scrutineers?
 - Who will these scrutineers be? Is this totally at the discretion of the registration board?

CORU Response: The Board will seek to appoint scrutineers that are independent and objective in fulfilling their function.

Question 10:

Do you have any other comments to make on the proposed Bye-Law?

Response:

- Ensure applicants are knowledgeable in Social Work Practice. There are many different experts in social work for example child care, mental health and intellectual disability. Each of these areas should be reflected on the committee.
- Candidates should be allowed to openly campaign for the elimination of high fees. €295 is too much.
- Very thorough process, reflecting the importance of the role well done.
- In 16(7) there is no information about the 'witness' to the identification process. Recommendation that there would be criteria in regard to who can be a witness (as per the process in voting for the university candidates in the Seanad elections for example)

CORU response: We do not think that it is necessary to specify who the witness is. We propose asking for the occupation of the witness.

Feedback received by email and telephone

One organisation made a submission via email. This was considered along with the responses to the feedback form.

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposed by-law. The following amendments are proposed as a result of the submissions received:

- insertion of definition of 'relative';
- insertion of additional provisions in relation to the returning officer, staff and conflict of interest;
- publication of the notice of the election on our website and one national newspaper;
- provision for a single ballot paper with multiple categories or a allot paper for each category;
- requirement that notice of the appointment of an agent is to be given to the returning officer no less than 2 days before the counting of votes.

Acknowledgements

CORU would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to all those that participated in the consultation process.

Appendix 1: Copy of Advertisement



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóislealigh
Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Public Consultation

Bye-law: Election of Members for Appointment to Social Workers Registration Board

The Social Workers Registration Board wants to hear the views of the public, the profession and other interested parties on a bye-law governing the election of members for appointment to the Social Workers Registration Board.

Further information on the consultation including the text of the bye-law and a feedback form can be found on www.coru.ie or by contacting us on 01 2933160 or emailing consultation@coru.ie

**The closing date for submitting comments is 5pm on
Thursday 3 May 2012.**

Submissions received after this
date will not be considered.

CORU is the registered business name of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Social Workers Registration Board. CORU is responsible for protecting the public by regulating health and social care professionals. It includes the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the 12 registration boards to be established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005.

Appendix 2: Press Release

Public Consultation Launched on Bye-Law Governing Elections to Social Workers Registration Board

Thursday 5 April 2012: The Social Workers Registration Board has today launched a [public consultation process](#) on a bye-law governing the election of members for appointment to the Board.

The Social Workers Registration Board has statutory responsibility for the registration of members of the profession; approval and monitoring of education and training programmes; establishing the code of professional conduct and ethics and standards of performance to which social workers must adhere and recognition of qualifications gained outside the State. It is the first of twelve Boards to be established under the remit of CORU, the multi-profession regulator for the health and social care professions.

The term of office for six members of the Board will expire on 5 August 2012. Three of these vacancies will be filled by election and the remaining three will be filled by the Minister for Health.

The Board is required by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 to make a bye-law to set out the conduct of elections for the appointment of members to the Board and CORU has launched a public consultation seeking the views of the public, the professions and other interested parties on the bye-law before its final approval by the Board.

Launching the public consultation, Ginny Hanrahan, Registrar, explained that: "The Social Workers Registration Board's goal is to protect the public by fostering high standards among the professionals required to register with us".

Ms Hanrahan encouraged people to participate in this public consultation process: "It is critical that the profession is represented on the Board and that is why these elections are so important. We want to ensure that the views of the public and the profession help to shape how the elections are governed".

The draft bye-law sets out:

1. The form of elections and voting system
2. Role of Returning Officer
3. The nomination procedure and categories of candidates
4. Ballot papers
5. The counting of votes
6. Declaration of result.

A copy of the bye-law can be viewed on www.coru.ie or can be requested by emailing consultation@coru.ie or contacting the Board on 01 2933160.

Feedback can be provided by filling in this feedback form

http://www.surveymonkey.net/MySurvey_CollectorList.aspx?sm=Pa99Jbj%2bYfxzs2Lq%2bmQb0YwWPHyLD7j6vS1UJzi2xks%3d by emailing

consultation@coru.ie, or in writing to Public Consultation, CORU, 13 - 15 The Mall, Beacon Court, Bracken Rd., Sandyford, Dublin 18.

The consultation process will close at 5pm on Thursday 3 May 2012. Any submissions received after this time will not be considered.

Appendix 3: Copy of Online Feedback Form

Public Consultation on Bye-Law on Election of Members to Social Workers Registration Board

Thank you for participating in this consultation process. This feedback form will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

The Social Workers Registration Board has statutory responsibility for maintaining the register of members of the profession, the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes; setting the code of professional conduct and ethics and standards of performance to which social workers must adhere and recognising qualifications gained outside the State. It is the first of twelve Boards to be established under the Health and Social care professionals Act 2005.

The Social Workers Registration Board members were appointed on 5 August 2010. Three vacancies will be filled by way of election on expiry of the members term of office on 4 August 2012. Two of these vacancies will be in category 1 and one vacancy will be in category 2. In 2014, elections will be held for a further three vacancies, one in each of the three categories.

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act sets out the electoral categories as follows:

Category 1. Three registrants who are engaged in the practice of the profession

Category 2: Two registrants who are engaged as members of the profession in the management of services provided by it.

Category 3: One is a registrant who is engaged in the education and training of persons in the State with respect to the practice of the profession.

The Board is required by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 to make a Bye-Law to set out the conduct of elections for the appointment of members to the Board and we have now launched a public consultation seeking the views of the public, the professions and other interested parties on the bye-law before its final approval by the Board.

We want to ensure that the views of the public and the profession help to shape how the elections are governed. By participating in this consultation process you are helping to shape how social workers are regulated.

Yours faithfully,
Ginny Hanrahan
Registrar

Contact Details:

You do not need to provide this information but please do if you would like us to provide you with details on the outcome of this consultation process.

First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Email _____

Telephone Number _____

Would you like to be added to our database so we can contact you regarding future developments? Please say YES or NO

Are you contributing to this survey in

(please tick one)

a personal capacity? _____

or as part of an organisation? _____

If part of an organisation, please specify): _____

How did you hear about this consultation?

(please tick as many as apply)

Advertisement in a newspaper _____

Article in a publication _____

On www.coru.ie _____

On another website _____

By email _____

Other (please specify) _____

Q1

The Bye-Law proposes that the electoral system is proportional representation by the single transferrable vote.

If you were to chose an electoral system would it be

(please tick one)

Proportional Representation _____
First past the post _____

Please provide any comments

Q2

The Bye-Law proposes that at least 56 days before the expiry of the current members term of office, notice will be given of the holding of the election.

Do you believe that the notice period is
(please tick one)

Too short _____
Sufficient _____
Too long _____

If you believe that an alternative notice period should be used, please say what that notice period should be. Please also provide any comments on the notice period

Q3

It is proposed that the notice of the election will be published on CORU website
Do you think that notice should be published on
CORU website _____
National Newspaper _____
Both _____

Please provide any comments on the publication of the notice of the election

Q4

The Bye-Law proposes that in order to be eligible for election for appointment to a Registration Board the person must among other things:-

- a) Be registered with the Registration Board for the designated profession on the day that the electoral register is established.
- b) Have been proposed by one registrant, and supported by a further four registrants of the profession in writing,
- c) submit a signed declaration confirming his or her eligibility to be nominated in the chosen category
- d) submit a signed declaration confirming that if he or she is elected there is no reason for the Minister to remove that person as a member of a registration board

Do you agree that the proposed nomination process is appropriate?

(please tick one)

- Strongly Agree _____
- Agree _____
- Disagree _____
- Strongly Disagree _____
- Don't Know _____

Do you have any comments on the nomination process?

Q 5

It is proposed that the names of the proposers and supporters of a candidate will be printed on the notice confirming the candidates validly nominated for election

Do you agree that the names of the proposer and 4 supporters should be published?

I agree _____

I disagree _____

No Opinion _____

Please provide any comments in relation to the publication of proposers and supporters names

Q6

It is proposed that candidates will have the option to have his/her photograph included on the ballot paper

Do you believe that photographs on ballot papers should be (please tick one)

Compulsory _____

Optional (at candidates discretion) _____

No Opinion _____

Q7

CORU is considering how best to provide canvassing information provided by candidates. It is proposed that canvassing material, limited to 300 words would be circulated by CORU on behalf of candidates. The register of electors will not contain registrants personal details including postal addresses.

Would you like to receive canvassing information on candidates with

- The ballot paper _____
- By separate correspondence from CORU _____
- Not at all _____

Please provide any comments on canvassing materials

Q8

It is proposed that ballot papers must be returned within 14 days.

Do you feel that a 14 day period is
(please tick one)

- Sufficient _____
- Too short _____
- Too Long _____

If you think that 14 days is too short or too long, would you like to suggest an alternative time period

Q9

It is proposed that the Social Workers Registration Board will appoint two scrutineers whose duty will be to monitor the process for determining the validity of nominations and that the counting of votes is carried out in accordance with the bye-law and in an honest, fair and accurate manner.

Please provide any comments on the role of the scrutineers

Q10

Please provide any other comments on the election process

Thank you for participating in this consultation process. Your views will be taken into consideration. If you have provided your contact details you will be contacted with details on the outcome of this process.

If you have any queries please contact CORU on 01 2933160 or email consultation@coru.ie .