
Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing

Constitution
and Standing Orders
of the
Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing

Accepted on the 17th June 2009

Amended December 2015

Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing

CONSTITUTION

NAME

The name of the organisation shall be the 'Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing'

1. RATIFICATION AND CHANGE

2.1 The Constitution came into effect upon its adoption at the inaugural meeting on 17 June 2009

2.2 The Constitution and Standing Orders of the Institute may be amended or repealed and new Standing Orders may be passed at any Annual General Meeting or any Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose, by two thirds of the membership of the Institute at that meeting, provided that notice of any proposed alteration shall be in writing to all members by the Secretary at least 30 days prior to that meeting.

2. NATURE OF THE INSTITUTE

3.1 The Institute shall be non-industrial, non-sectarian and not aligned with any political party.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In the definition of this Constitution and these Standing Orders, except when excluded by the content:

4.1 'Nurse' shall mean a nurse registered by the appropriate Nurse Registration Body in any jurisdiction (e.g. An Bord Altranais or equivalent) and entitled to practise as a Registered Nurse in any field of nursing.

4.2 'Field of Mental Health' shall mean any service or organisation that is involved with mental health care.

4.3 'The (Institute)' shall mean the Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing.

4.4 'Ordinary Member' shall mean any person who has become an ordinary member as provided in the Standing Orders and whose membership has not ceased in accordance with any of the provisions of those Standing Orders.

4.5 'Associate Member' shall be any organisation or person who is not entitled to be an ordinary member and has particular interest in mental health nursing and paid an annual subscription as an Associate Member.

4.6 'Honorary Member' shall mean the privilege of membership to the Institute without the requirement to pay a fee for the remainder of their life. This category of membership may be granted to a person by the Executive.

4.7 'Student Member' shall mean any undergraduate mental health nursing student who is registered with an Irish University or Institute of Technology. Student Members are exempt from paying an annual subscription fee for the duration of their registered studentship.

- 4.8 'Executive' shall mean the governing body of the Institute appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Orders.
- 4.9 'Committee' shall mean any group convened by the Executive, with specific terms of reference as defined by the Executive.
- 4.10 'Mental Health/Psychiatric Nursing' shall mean a specialised field of the Nursing Profession within which nurses practice, at different levels and scope.
- 4.11 'Executive Officer' shall mean any Officer of the Executive. Executive Officers' roles shall include the responsibilities as defined in the Standing Orders and such duties as prescribed by the Chairperson from time to time.
- 4.12 'Chairperson' shall mean the Chairperson of the Executive appointed in accordance with the Standing Orders or any other member acting for or on behalf of the Chairperson.
- 4.13 'Vice Chairperson' shall mean the Vice Chairperson appointed by the Executive to act for or in the absence of the Chairperson
- 4.14 'Secretary' shall mean the Secretary appointed by the Executive to manage and co-ordinate meetings and correspondence of the Institute and the Executive.
- 4.15 'Membership Secretary' shall mean the Membership Secretary appointed by the Executive to manage the membership of the Institute.
- 4.16 'Treasurer' shall mean the person/s appointed by the Executive to manage the monies of the Institute.
- 4.17 'Public Relations Officer' shall mean the person appointed by the Executive to deal with public relations issues of, or relating to the Institute.
- 4.18 'Web Master' shall mean the person appointed by the Executive to maintain and update the webpage developed by the Institute.

5. AIM OF THE INSTITUTE

5.1 The aim of the Institute is to promote excellence in the provision of Mental Health Nursing and in mental health service delivery, within the context of a multidisciplinary approach, both in Ireland and internationally.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTITUTE

6.1 The objectives of the Institute are to:

- act as a forum to facilitate and enable discussion and debate on issues relevant to mental health nursing
- promote excellence in mental health practice and mental health nurse education
- foster the ongoing development of the profession of mental health nursing
- contribute to policy development on matters relevant to mental health nursing and mental health service delivery
- serve as a critical voice for mental health nursing
- promote opportunities for networking and professional development among nurses practicing in the field of mental health.
- promote and advocate the use, the development and the expansion of mental health nursing within the context of an interprofessional approach to health care delivery

7. STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE

7.1 The Institute shall be one body within which Committees may be formed with the authority of the Executive for the purposes of undertaking particular tasks or roles on behalf of the Institute.

7.2 Where a Committee is established it shall be accountable to the Executive [and shall report to the Executive in such times, manner, format and content as the Executive shall request].

8. MEMBERSHIP

8.1 The Institute shall consist of an unlimited number of members, comprised of Ordinary Members, Associate Members, Student members and Honorary Members, admitted to membership in accordance with the terms of the Standing Orders.

9. GOVERNING BODY

9.1 The affairs of the Institute shall be managed by the Executive.

9.2 The Executive shall consist of **minimally** 12 elected members: seven named officers and five ordinary officers elected in accordance with the terms of the Standing Orders.

9.3 The named officers shall be: the Chairperson, Vice chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Public Relations Officer, and Web Master.

9.4 All executive members shall be eligible for re-appointment subject to the conditions defined in the Standing Orders of the Institute.

9.5 The Executive shall appoint/elect the Chairperson from their number at the first meeting after the annual general meeting and the Chairperson will oversee the process of appointment/election of the other named officers from the elected officers of the Executive.

9.6 The Executive shall meet within one month of the annual general meeting, and thereafter as defined in the Standing Orders

9.7 The Executive shall meet together for the dispatch of business and adjourn meetings as it thinks fit.

9.8 **Half the minimum** plus one of the Executive's membership shall form a quorum.

10. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE INSTITUTE

- 10.1 The whole of the management of the business and control of the Institute shall be vested in the Executive.
- 10.2 The income and property of the Institute shall be applied solely towards the promotion and the objectives of the Institute and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of profit to the members of the Institute provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith or remuneration to any officer or servant of the Institute in return for any services actually rendered to the Institute.

11. GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

- 11.1 An Annual General Meeting of ordinary members shall be held each year provided that this meeting is held within fifteen (15) months of the preceding meeting. A Minimum of one (1) month's notice in writing is required to convene the Annual General Meeting.
- 11.2 An Extraordinary General Meeting of members may be convened at any time for any special purpose by the Executive upon the written and signed request of at least seven members of the Executive. To convene an Extraordinary General Meeting, the Chairperson must provide all members with thirty days (30) notice in writing stipulating the agenda for the meeting.
- 11.3 A written report by the Chairperson of the activities of the Institute during the preceding financial year, together with the financial statements, shall be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- 11.4 An auditor, not being a member of the Institute, shall be appointed by the Annual General Meeting. A vacancy occurring in the office of auditor during the year shall be filled by appointment by the Executive.
- 11.5 No business shall be transacted at the Annual General Meeting unless a quorum consisting of 10% of Ordinary Members shall be present at the commencement of business. If a quorum of members is not present, an Annual General meeting shall be adjourned, for a period of four (4) weeks and an Extraordinary General Meeting called. Those present at the Extraordinary General Meeting will constitute the quorum for the meeting.
- 11.6 At all general meetings the Chairperson, and in their absence the Vice Chairperson, or by request from the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson a member elected by the Executive shall take the chair.
- 11.7 At all general meetings, every member shall be entitled to speak upon every motion. Ordinary members are entitled to one vote. In the event of a majority vote not being reached the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

12. EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

12.1 Any agreement or other instrument may be made or entered into, executed or from time to time altered, amended, varied, modified or cancelled, by or on behalf of the Institute by the Executive.

13. BALLOTS

13.1 The Executive or an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting shall have full power to refer any question which in its opinion is of more than ordinary importance for determination by ballot of Ordinary Members.

13.2 In the event of a Ballot being required under this or any other rule the Chairperson shall appoint a Returning Officer.

13.3 The Returning Officer shall forward a ballot paper to each Ordinary Member, which shall contain full particulars regarding the matter upon which decision is asked and shall clearly state the date of closing for receipt of the completed ballot.

13.4 The Returning Officer shall certify to the Executive the result of the Ballot which shall be binding upon all members of the Institute.

14. COMMITTEE

14.1 A Committee may be established in any defined geographical region or among professionals involved in like roles to further the objects of the Institute.

14.2 The Committee shall not be deemed to be an agent for and shall have no power to impose any responsibility or liability on, or pledge the credit of the Institute in respect of any expenses, acts, matters, or things incurred or done by the Committee.

15. DISBANDING THE INSTITUTE

15.1 Any resolution to disband the Institute shall be submitted to members for their consideration.

15.2 The Institute may be disbanded on the affirmation vote of two thirds majority of the Ordinary Members on the register (voting in person) at a general meeting convened for this purpose and thirty days notice in writing (stating the proposed disbanding of the Institute) to all financial ordinary members is required to convene the general meeting and accepted by no less than a three-quarters majority vote of all paid up members.

15.3 Upon disbanding any surplus monies, after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, shall **not** be paid or distributed among the ex members of the Institute but will be transferred to an association with similar objectives or a charitable organisation. Such associations or organisations shall be determined by the Executive at or before the time of dissolution

16. AFFILIATION

16.1 The Institute may, by resolution of the Executive, affiliate or co-operate in any lawful purpose with any other organisation, provided that affiliation with any organisation shall not be effected unless and until a resolution in favour thereof has been carried by a majority of the members at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting.

STANDING ORDERS

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Ordinary membership of the 'Institute' is open to all Nurses practising in the Field of Mental Health'

1.2 Associate membership is open to all persons and organisations who are not eligible for ordinary membership.

1.3 Student Membership is open to all undergraduate mental health nursing students who are registered with an Irish University or Institute of Technology.

1.4 Honorary Members shall be persons elected for the time being, by the Executive to membership by virtue of courtesy, prestige, or by their indirect but continuing support to the Institute. Such Honorary membership shall have Associate status, without the requirement to pay a fee.

1.5 The Institute, on the recommendation of Executive, shall appoint any category of member to be a Life Member of the Institute.

2. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Application for membership of any category of membership, with the exception of Honorary Members shall be made to the Membership Secretary on the approved application form together with evidence of a paid subscription fee or on authority to deduct the fee from the applicant's bank account. Upon receipt of such application and subscription arrangement the person shall, subject to the conditions of membership, become a member of the Institute from the date of confirmation by the Membership Secretary.

2.2 The Membership Secretary may refer any application for membership of the Institute for consideration of decision by the Executive, in which case such person shall not become a member until notified in writing by the Membership Secretary, where in any case the decision of the Executive shall be final without assigning any reason.

2.3 There shall be a register of all members of the Institute which shall be kept in the custody of the Membership Secretary. The register will be reviewed each year in order to keep it up to-date.

2.4 The Membership Secretary shall advise the Secretary as to any new members after each three months, or as requested.

3. MEMBERSHIP FEES

3.1 Each member bar Student Members shall pay an annual subscription to the Institute.

3.2 The amount of the annual subscription shall be determined and reviewed, from time to time, by the Executive.

3.3 The subscription shall be payable annually in September and membership shall automatically lapse if the annual subscription has not been paid within three calendar months of the due date.

4. MEMBERSHIP RESIGNATION/SUSPENSION

4.1 Any member of the Institute wishing to resign from the Institute shall give 30 days advanced notice in writing to the Membership Secretary.

4.2 Membership shall be automatically terminated where the payment of subscription fees is in arrears, pursuant to paragraph 3.3 above.

4.3 A member may be asked to resign, his/her membership discontinued or be suspended for a period of time if the Executive considers that the member has engaged in unethical behaviour or any conduct unworthy of a member, or wilfully refuses or neglects to comply with the provisions of the Institute's Constitution or these Standing Orders. A decision to this effect will be made by a majority vote at a meeting of the Executive.

5. VOTING AT GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE INSTITUTE

5.1 Only Ordinary Members of the Institute shall have voting rights at Annual or Extraordinary General Meetings.

5.2 Only current paid up Ordinary Members are entitled to vote.

5.3 Voting at any Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting will be in person and shall be by a show of hands or secret ballot, as determined by the Chairperson.

5.4 Voting on some issues may be conducted electronically on official voting template [where the Executive deems it appropriate]

5.5 In the event that there is an equality of votes on any matter the Chairperson will have the deciding vote.

6. THE EXECUTIVE

6.1 Any person appointed to the Executive must be an Ordinary Member.

6.2 The Executive will consist of seven (7) named office holders and five (5) ordinary members.

6.3 A quorum for the executive shall be half the Executive membership plus one (1).

6.4 Two (2) months prior to the Annual General Meeting the Ordinary Members will be asked to nominate candidates for election to the Executive, using a specific nomination form made available on the Institute Website or sent to them by post by the Secretary to the address notified by them to the Membership Secretary.

6.5 In order for a nomination to the Executive to be valid, each nominee must agree to such nomination whether on the nomination form, or by confirming their consent in writing to the Executive, and nominations must be proposed by one Ordinary Member and seconded by another Ordinary Member.

6.6 The Executive will be elected from the nominees, by the Ordinary Members, through a secret ballot at the Annual General Meeting.

6.7 The Chairperson will appoint a Returning Officer to oversee the election.

6.8 In the event that voting does not produce a majority, a re-ballot will occur.

6.9 At the first meeting of the Executive following the Annual General Meeting, the Executive will nominate and vote for one of their number to undertake the role of Chairperson.

6.10 The Chairperson will then oversee the appointment/election of the other Executive Officers.

6.11 In the event of more than one person being nominated for any position a secret ballot will be held.

7. TERM OF OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

7.1 The term of office of the Executive will commence at the completion of the Annual General Meeting at which they are elected.

7.2 Each Executive member will hold office for a period of three (3) years and be eligible for re-election for a second term of office. At the completion of this second term, they may be re-elected as ordinary members but are not eligible to hold an officer position for a period of at least two years.

8. RESIGNING OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

8.1 In the event of any member of the Executive resigning before the expiration of the full term of office, the office shall be filled by the Executive co-opting a new member from the members of the Institute. Should a vacancy in the position of Chairperson or Treasurer occur, it will be filled temporarily by appointment from the then current Executive members until such time that a new appointment can be arranged. Such member appointed under this rule shall hold office only for the unexpired term of position to the Executive. Members elected to the Executive pursuant to this rule may be re-elected in their own right and be entitled to a full term of office.

8.2 In the event of the Executive being reduced to less than seven (7) members, the remaining Executive members may act notwithstanding a vacancy in their number and shall as soon as reasonably practicable appoint such additional number of members to the Executive additional so that there are not less than seven (7) members of the Executive to act as a caretaker Executive which will have and may exercise the powers of the Executive until a new Executive shall have been elected, at the next Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

8.3 In the event of the Executive resigning as a body the resigning Executive shall forthwith appoint seven (7) members of the Institute as a caretaker Executive which will have and may exercise the powers of the Executive until a new Executive shall have been elected, at the next Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

8.4 The office of a member of the Executive shall be automatically be vacated if the person ceases to be a member of the Institute, or s/he fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Executive without leave of absence approved by the Executive.

9. POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

9.1 The Executive shall have the power:

- To oversee the day to day running of the Institute.
- To pay the charges and expenses incidental to the conducting of the business of the Institute.
- To purchase, hire, or otherwise acquire any resources necessary for the purpose of the Institute.
- To employ any person deemed necessary for carrying out the objects of the Institute, and at any time to suspend or discharge any such person and to fix the remuneration to be paid to such person.
- To invest any monies of the Institute in such a manner as may be provided in the Constitution and Standing Orders.
- To publish materials promoting the interests of the Institute.
- To arrange for elections or ballots under the Standing Orders.
- To terminate or suspend from the Institute, or remove from office any member who has engaged in unethical behaviour, any conduct unworthy of a member, or disobeyed the Constitution or Standing Orders.
- To call a special or general meeting to consider any subject deemed to require attention.
- To propose the appointment of an external auditor
- To determine and collect membership fees payable by members.
- To appoint committees who shall report from time to time to the Executive.
- To appoint any person as representative of the Institute

- To borrow money for the purpose of the Institute, charging any of the Institute's real or personal property as the security for the repayment of any money borrowed.

10. MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE

10.1 The Executive shall meet at least four (4) times a year.

10.2 In the event that decisions at the Executive cannot be reached through consensus, a simple majority of the members in attendance shall suffice. In the event that there is an equality of votes among the members of the Executive, the Chairperson will have a second and casting vote.

10.3 No resolution passed at any meeting of the Executive shall be rescinded at any subsequent meeting unless previous notice of the intention has been given in the notification convening the meeting.

11. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

CHAIRPERSON

- The Chairperson shall be the Chief Officer of the Institute and shall preside at general meetings and meetings of the Executive, and upon the minutes being confirmed, sign a minute book in the presence of the meeting.
- The Chairperson shall enforce the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Institute and have control of meetings at which s/he presides and shall use all necessary power to secure and enforce order and expedition in the conduct of the business and good order of the members thereat.
- The Chairperson shall conduct all meetings in accordance with the Standing Orders determined by the Executive.
- The Chairperson shall be ex-officio a member of all committees appointed by Executive.
- In matters of urgency the Chairperson may act in conjunction with the Executive Officer and/or Treasurer and take decisions as if they were a fully quorate Executive.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

- The Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in his absence.
- In the event of the absence of the Vice Chairperson and the Chairperson from any meeting of the Executive, the Executive shall elect one of their members to act as Chairperson of such meeting.

SECRETARY

- The Secretary shall attend General meetings of the Institute.
- The Secretary shall keep a copy of all correspondence.
- The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and records of all business transacted by the Institute.
- The Secretary shall convene all general meetings of the Institute and summon members of Council to meetings.
- The Secretary shall keep a register of all members of the Institute.
- The Secretary shall discharge all such duties and other services as may be assigned by Executive.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

- The Membership Secretary shall manage all matters to do with recruitment of new members and renewal of memberships.
- The Membership Secretary shall maintain records and a database relating to membership.
- The Membership Secretary shall keep a correct account of all monies received as payment of membership fees and forward that money to the treasurer.

TREASURER

- The Treasurer shall furnish to the Executive at each meeting a statement showing the financial position of the Institute.
- At the Executive meeting held prior to the Annual General Meeting, the Treasurer shall furnish to the Executive a detailed report of the Institute's financial position, accompanied by a properly drawn balance sheet.
- The Treasurer shall keep all books and records and in particular have charge and custody of all current receipts of money belonging to the Institute and ensure the prompt payment of such monies into the appropriate bank account for the Institute.
- The Treasurer shall keep a correct account of all monies received and extended.
- The Treasurer shall ensure that all payments are made by cheque or petty cash.
- The Treasurer shall produce any books and records for inspection at all reasonable times when demanded by the Executive or auditors and supply

such information regarding financial matters as may be required by the Executive.

- The Treasurer shall not pay, lend or otherwise appropriate any of the funds of the Institute for any cause or purpose whatsoever unless authorised by the Executive.
- The Treasurer shall not make any disbursement directly out of any of the monies received before being paid into the bank.

EXTERNAL AUDITOR

- The auditor shall be nominated and accepted at the Annual General Meeting.
- The auditor will have access to and examine all accounts and documents of the Institute.
- The auditor will furnish the Executive with a written statement that all documents are in accordance with the regulations of the Institute.
- The auditor shall have to power to make any suggestions concerning the financial affairs of the Institute.
- The financial year shall end on 31st August, on which day the accounts of the Institute shall be balanced.

WEB MASTER

- The Webmaster shall maintain and update information on the Institute's website.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

- The Public Relations Officer shall initiate and plan PR campaigns, write and edit press releases, and assist with publication of the annual reports.
- The Public Relations Officer shall prepare and supervise the production of publicity information such as brochures, handouts, promotional videos.
- The Public Relations Officer shall organise special events, such as press conferences and speak on behalf of the organisation at press conferences, radio and TV interviews, and meetings.
- The Public Relations Officer shall develop and maintain good working relations with the media, including local and national newspapers, magazines, radio and TV.