ICPHAA

Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association

MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Cross-Border Practice Policy

The standards ICPHAA members follow when working with clients outside Ireland, practising from abroad, or managing situations where more than one jurisdiction is involved.

REFERENCE	ICPHAA-POL-10	VERSION	1.0
EFFECTIVE	9 November 2026	NEXT REVIEW	9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors		

MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE · ICPHAA-POL-10

Cross-Border Practice Policy

APPLIES TO	All ICPHAA members whose work involves a client, supervisee or service located outside Ireland, including Northern Ireland, or who practise while living abroad.
VERSION	1.0 · effective 9 November 2026 · next review 9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors
CONTACT	ICPHAA Registry · admin@icphaa.ie

AT A GLANCE

- The client's location matters: the law and regulation where the client is may apply as well as Irish law.
- Before starting, members check regulation, insurance, data protection and emergency arrangements for the client's jurisdiction.
- ICPHAA standards apply in full wherever the member or client is located.
- ICPHAA membership does not give anyone a right to practise in another jurisdiction.
- Changes in where a client or member lives are reviewed promptly and discussed in supervision.

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1. Purpose

Online and telephone practice means that members increasingly work with people who are not in Ireland: clients in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, Irish people living abroad, clients who travel or move during therapy, and international clients who find members online. Members may also live or spend time abroad

while continuing to practise. These situations bring real benefits, but also legal, regulatory, insurance, data protection and safeguarding questions that do not arise when practitioner and client are both in Ireland.

This policy sets out the standards ICPHAA expects members to follow whenever their work crosses a border, and how to handle less common situations where it is not clear which rules apply. It builds on the Digital & Practice Environment Policy and the ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members.

2. Scope

This policy applies to every ICPHAA member, in every membership category, who:

- works with a client who is located outside Ireland at the time of the session, including in Northern Ireland, which is a separate legal jurisdiction with its own law and safeguarding arrangements;
- provides supervision, consultation or training to practitioners or organisations outside Ireland;
- practises, for any period, while they themselves are located outside Ireland;
- works with a client who is visiting Ireland from elsewhere, or who moves into or out of Ireland during the work.

It applies in person, online, by telephone and in writing.

3. Principles

- **Location matters.** When practitioner and client are in different places, the law and professional regulation of both places may be relevant. Members should treat the client's location at the time of the session as significant.
- **ICPHAA standards travel with the member.** The ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members and ICPHAA policies apply in full wherever the member or client is located.
- **Check, do not assume.** Members are responsible for finding out what applies before they begin, rather than assuming that Irish rules are the only ones relevant.
- **The client's safety comes first.** Distance must not leave a client without access to help in an emergency.
- **Honesty about status.** Members describe their qualifications and ICPHAA membership accurately and do not imply that membership gives them a right to practise in any other jurisdiction.

4. Before you begin cross-border work

Before starting work with a client who is outside Ireland, or before practising from abroad, members should:

1. Find out whether counselling, psychotherapy or the member's allied discipline is regulated in the client's jurisdiction and whether any registration, licence or title restriction applies to someone

practising there remotely. Where the position is unclear, members should seek advice before proceeding.

2. Confirm in writing with their professional indemnity insurer that their policy covers clients in that jurisdiction and, where relevant, claims brought in that jurisdiction, in line with the Insurance & Liability Policy.
3. Check that their platform, record-keeping and any transfer of personal data meet the requirements of the GDPR and, where relevant, the law of the client's jurisdiction.
4. Identify local emergency and crisis services where the client is, and agree an emergency plan with the client, as set out in the Digital & Practice Environment Policy.
5. Consider whether they have the cultural, linguistic and contextual understanding needed to work competently with the client, and whether the client would be better served by a local practitioner.
6. Explain these matters to the client as part of informed consent, including which complaints routes are available to them, and record the discussion.

5. Regulation and professional titles

In Ireland, CORU is the regulator for health and social care professionals under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, and statutory registration of counsellors and psychotherapists is being introduced by CORU. Members should follow CORU's own published guidance and timelines on registration and on the use of protected titles, including how they apply to practitioners who are based outside Ireland but work with clients in Ireland, and to practitioners based in Ireland who work with clients abroad.

Other jurisdictions have their own arrangements, which may differ for different professions and titles. Members are responsible for checking and complying with the rules that apply where their clients are.

ICPHAA is a voluntary, not-for-profit professional membership association. ICPHAA membership is not statutory registration in Ireland or elsewhere, does not license any practitioner, and does not give a right to practise in any jurisdiction.

6. Data protection across borders

Members based in Ireland are subject to the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018 for all the client data they process, wherever the client is located. In particular:

- transferring personal data to a country outside the European Economic Area, including by using a platform or cloud service that stores data there, is permitted only where the GDPR's conditions for international transfers are met, for example through an adequacy decision or appropriate safeguards;
- members who practise while temporarily abroad must keep client records as secure as they would in Ireland, and should avoid storing client data on devices or services that do not meet GDPR standards;
- clients in other jurisdictions may also have rights under their own local law, which members should respect where it applies.

Members who are unsure whether a transfer is lawful should seek advice before proceeding.

7. Safeguarding and emergencies across borders

Distance does not reduce a member's duty of care. Members working with clients outside Ireland must:

- confirm the client's location at the start of each session and hold the details of local emergency services for that location;
- continue to meet their obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and the Safeguarding & Duty of Care Policy;
- where a safeguarding concern relates to a child or adult at risk in another jurisdiction, take advice on how to report it to the appropriate authority in that jurisdiction, as well as considering any reporting duty in Ireland;
- record the concern, the advice received and the action taken, and discuss it in supervision.

Where there is an imminent risk to life, members contact the emergency services in the place where the client is, and act first to protect the person at risk.

8. Changes and complex situations

Some situations do not fit neatly into any one set of rules. Members should take particular care, and seek supervision and, where needed, advice, in situations such as:

- **A client moves abroad during therapy.** Review whether continuing is appropriate and lawful, check insurance and emergency arrangements, and plan a referral or ending if it is not.
- **A client is temporarily abroad**, for example on holiday or working overseas. Consider whether to pause sessions or continue with an adjusted emergency plan, and agree this in advance where possible.
- **The member relocates or works from abroad.** Tell the ICPHAA Registry, check insurance and data protection arrangements, and consider any rules in the country where the member is living.
- **A client is visiting Ireland** from another jurisdiction. Consider continuity of care after the client returns home.
- **Online directories and platforms.** Where a member is listed on an international platform, check how clients are matched and where they may be located, and make sure the member's information is accurate.

Members trained outside Ireland who apply for ICPHAA membership have their qualifications assessed by the Accreditation Department in line with the ICPHAA accreditation requirements. This assessment is for ICPHAA membership only.

9. Responsibilities and breaches

Members are responsible for checking and complying with the rules that apply to their cross-border work, for holding appropriate insurance, for protecting client data, for keeping emergency arrangements in place, and for telling ICPHAA if they relocate or substantially change the reach of their practice.

ICPHAA is responsible for providing general guidance on request through the ICPHAA Registry and for keeping this policy under review. ICPHAA cannot give legal advice on the law of other jurisdictions; members should seek independent advice where needed.

Practising in a way that breaches the law or regulation of the client's jurisdiction, or that leaves a client without appropriate safeguards, may be a breach of the ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members and may be considered under the Complaints Procedures and, where relevant, the Fitness to Practise Policy and Disciplinary Procedures. Questions can be sent to the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie.

10. Monitoring and review

The ICPHAA Board of Directors owns this policy and reviews it at least annually, or sooner where changes in Irish or international law, statutory regulation, technology or professional practice require it. The current version is available at www.icphaa.ie.

READ ALONGSIDE

- Digital & Practice Environment Policy
- Insurance & Liability Policy
- Safeguarding & Duty of Care Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Emerging Regulation (CORU) Policy
- Legal & Data Governance Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	CHANGE	APPROVED BY
1.0	9 November 2026	Reissued in the ICPHAA policy framework (replaces the former ICPA version).	ICPHAA Board of Directors

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