ICPHAA

Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association

GOVERNANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION

External Relations Policy

How ICPHAA represents itself to, and works with, the public, the media, statutory bodies, training providers and partners, and how members may use the ICPHAA name and logo.

REFERENCE	ICPHAA-POL-35	VERSION	1.0
EFFECTIVE	9 November 2026	NEXT REVIEW	9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors		

External Relations Policy

APPLIES TO	The ICPHAA Board of Directors, Registry, Accreditation Department, staff, volunteers and anyone speaking for the Association; every member in using the ICPHAA name, logo or membership status.
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

- Only people authorised by the Board speak on behalf of ICPHAA.
- ICPHAA always describes itself accurately: a voluntary professional association, not a statutory regulator.
- The Association cooperates with statutory bodies such as CORU, Tusla and the Data Protection Commission as the law requires.
- Partnerships and endorsements are approved by the Board, documented and free of conflicts of interest.
- Members use the ICPHAA name and logo only to show their current, accurate membership category.

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1. Purpose

The Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association (ICPHAA) relies on the trust of the public, the people it works with and its own members. How the Association presents itself, and how its name and logo are used, affects that trust directly.

This policy sets out how ICPHAA manages its relationships with the public, the media, statutory bodies, training providers and other partners; who may speak for the Association; how members may use the ICPHAA name, logo and membership status; and how external relations support the protection of the public.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the ICPHAA Board of Directors, the Registry, the Accreditation Department, staff, volunteers and anyone acting or speaking on the Association's behalf, in every medium, including print, broadcast, websites, email and social media. It also applies to every member in respect of how they use the ICPHAA name, logo, certificates and membership status.

3. Principles

- **Accuracy.** Everything ICPHAA says about itself, its members and its standards is true and not misleading.
- **Independence.** ICPHAA's decisions and public positions are not influenced by commercial or private interests.
- **Public interest.** External relations support, and never compromise, the protection of the public.
- **Respect.** ICPHAA engages courteously with other organisations and professionals, and does not comment on or compare itself with other associations.
- **Confidentiality.** ICPHAA never discloses confidential or personal information in its external communications except where the law requires or permits.
- **Political neutrality.** ICPHAA may comment on public policy that affects mental health, clients or the professions, but it is not party-political and does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

These principles apply equally to formal statements, informal conversations with partners, and anything published under the ICPHAA name online.

4. Speaking on behalf of ICPHAA

1. Only the chair of the Board, or another person authorised by the Board for a particular purpose, may make public statements, give interviews or express a position on behalf of ICPHAA.
2. Media enquiries are directed to the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie, which passes them to an authorised spokesperson.
3. Public positions on policy matters, including responses to public consultations, are approved by the Board or by a director it authorises.
4. ICPHAA does not comment publicly on individual members, complaints or cases, except to confirm a member's current status or to publish an outcome where an ICPHAA procedure provides for it.

5. Members, staff and volunteers who speak publicly in a personal or professional capacity make clear that they are not speaking for ICPHAA, unless authorised to do so.

5. Relations with statutory bodies

ICPHAA works constructively and openly with public bodies whose functions relate to its members' work, including CORU, the Data Protection Commission, Tusla, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive. In particular, ICPHAA:

- engages with CORU on the statutory regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists, including by responding to consultations where appropriate, and keeps members informed in line with the Emerging Regulation (CORU) Policy;
- cooperates with any lawful request or inquiry from a public body, promptly and honestly;
- shares information about members with a public body only where there is a lawful basis, such as a legal obligation or the need to protect a person from serious harm, and records what was shared and why, in line with the Legal & Data Governance Policy;
- never represents itself as having statutory powers, government recognition or any role it does not have.

6. Partnerships, training providers and endorsements

ICPHAA may work with training providers, colleges, employers and other organisations to further its purposes, for example by accrediting training programmes or co-hosting CPD events.

- Formal partnerships and accreditation arrangements are approved in line with the Board's delegations, set out in a written agreement and reviewed periodically.
- Before entering a partnership, ICPHAA checks that the partner's values and practices are consistent with its own and that the arrangement does not create a conflict of interest. Any director or staff member with an interest in a proposed partner declares it and takes no part in the decision, in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Accredited training providers may state that a programme is accredited by ICPHAA only while the accreditation is current, using the wording ICPHAA approves, and must not suggest that completing the programme guarantees membership in any category or statutory registration.
- ICPHAA does not endorse commercial products or services, and does not accept sponsorship that could compromise, or appear to compromise, its independence.

7. Members' use of the ICPHAA name, logo and status

Members may refer to their ICPHAA membership, and use any member logo ICPHAA provides, to show the public that they belong to the Association. They must:

- state their exact current membership category (for example, Pre-Accredited Member or Accredited Member & Supervisor) and not imply a higher category;
- use the logo only in the form provided, without alteration, and only while their membership is current;
- never describe ICPHAA membership as a licence or as statutory registration, or suggest that ICPHAA endorses their particular services;
- where helpful, direct clients to www.icphaa.ie/verify-certificate so that their status can be checked;
- remove references to ICPHAA membership, and the logo, from websites, directories, social media and stationery promptly if their membership lapses, is suspended or ends.

> MISUSE
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> Misuse of the ICPHAA name, logo or certificates, by a member or anyone else, may be addressed under the Disciplinary Procedures and, where appropriate, by legal action.

8. Digital and social media

ICPHAA's official channels, including its website and any social media accounts, are managed by people authorised by the Board. Content is accurate, respectful and consistent with ICPHAA policies; it never includes client information or identifiable details of any concern about a member. Members using social media in a professional capacity follow the ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members and the Digital & Practice Environment Policy, and take care not to bring the Association or the professions into disrepute.

9. Public protection in external relations

Events, conferences and speaking engagements

People who represent ICPHAA at external events, or who speak at ICPHAA events, declare any relevant commercial or personal interest in advance. Presentations at ICPHAA events must be accurate, respectful of client confidentiality and free of promotion of commercial products. Speakers who are not authorised spokespeople make clear that their views are their own.

Feedback and concerns about ICPHAA itself

ICPHAA welcomes feedback about its own services and conduct, as distinct from concerns about individual members. Feedback and concerns about the Association can be sent to the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie. They are acknowledged, considered by someone not directly involved, and answered with an explanation of any action taken. Themes are reported to the Board so that the Association can learn and improve.

External relations serve the protection of the public. ICPHAA therefore makes it easy for the public to check a member's status online; publishes clear information on how to raise a concern about a member; answers enquiries from the public promptly and accurately; and, where an ICPHAA decision affects a member's status, updates the verification information as its procedures provide. Where a concern falls within the remit of a statutory body, ICPHAA directs the person to that body.

10. Responsibilities, concerns and review

The ICPHAA Board of Directors owns this policy and authorises spokespeople. The Registry manages enquiries and the Association's official channels. Members are responsible for using the ICPHAA name, logo and status accurately.

Concerns about how ICPHAA has represented itself, or about misuse of its name or logo, can be raised with the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie. The policy is reviewed by the date shown on the cover, and earlier if statutory regulation or the Association's partnerships change significantly.

READ ALONGSIDE

- Public-Facing Transparency Policy
- Public Protection Policy
- Emerging Regulation (CORU) Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Digital & Practice Environment Policy
- Disciplinary Procedures

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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