ICPHAA

Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association

GOVERNANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Document Control Policy

How ICPHAA creates, numbers, approves, publishes, reviews and withdraws its policies, procedures and other controlled documents, so that everyone always uses the current, approved version.

REFERENCE	ICPHAA-POL-32	VERSION	1.0
EFFECTIVE	9 November 2026	NEXT REVIEW	9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors		

GOVERNANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION · ICPHAA-POL-32

Document Control Policy

APPLIES TO	The ICPHAA Board of Directors, Registry, Accreditation Department, committees, panels and anyone who drafts or publishes an ICPHAA controlled document.
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

- Every controlled document has a reference number, version, owner, effective date and next review date.
- Policies are approved by the ICPHAA Board of Directors before they take effect.
- The current version is always the one published at www.icphaa.ie; printed copies are uncontrolled.
- Documents are reviewed by their review date, and sooner if the law or practice changes.
- Superseded versions are archived, not deleted, so that the Association's history is preserved.

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1. Purpose

Members, clients and the public rely on the Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association (ICPHAA) to publish standards that are accurate, current and properly approved. If different versions of a policy are in circulation, or no one knows which version applies, the result can be unfairness, confusion and risk.

This policy sets out how ICPHAA controls its documents through their whole life: drafting, numbering, approval, publication, communication, review, revision, withdrawal and archiving. Its aim is simple: everyone should always be able to find and use the current, approved version of any ICPHAA document.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all ICPHAA controlled documents, including:

- the ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members and every policy and procedure in the ICPHAA policy and procedure framework;
- the ICPHAA accreditation requirements and guidance published by the Accreditation Department;
- terms of reference for committees and panels;
- standard forms, declarations and templates, including application, renewal and complaints forms;
- official guidance notes issued to members.

It does not apply to routine correspondence, news items or event listings, which are managed in the ordinary way.

3. Definitions

TERM	MEANING
Controlled document	A document within the scope of this policy whose content, version and approval are formally managed.
Document owner	The body responsible for a document's content and review. For policies, this is the ICPHAA Board of Directors.
Version	A numbered issue of a document, shown on the cover and in the document control table.
Effective date	The date from which a version applies.
Next review date	The date by which the document must be reviewed.
Superseded	A version that has been replaced by a later version.
Withdrawn	A document that no longer applies and has not been replaced.

4. Identification and numbering

Every controlled document carries the following information on its cover or first page and, for policies, in the document control table at the end:

- **Reference number.** Policies are numbered in the form ICPHAA-POL-*nn*. Other document types use a prefix agreed by the Board. Numbers are never reused.
- **Title** and, for policies, the **area** of the framework to which it belongs.
- **Version number.** The first approved issue is version 1.0. Minor changes that do not alter meaning or obligations, such as correcting a typographical error or updating a link, increase the number after the point (1.1, 1.2). Substantive changes increase the number before the point (2.0).

- **Effective date** and **next review date**.
- **Document owner.**

Draft documents are clearly marked 'Draft' with a draft number and date, and must not be published or relied on as ICPHAA policy.

5. Drafting, consultation and approval

1. **Need identified.** The need for a new or revised document is identified, for example through a scheduled review, a change in law, statutory regulation, learning from concerns or a request from members.
2. **Drafting.** A draft is prepared using the ICPHAA document template, in plain British and Irish English, consistent with the Vision Statement & Ethos and with other ICPHAA documents.
3. **Checking.** The draft is checked for accuracy, legal compliance and consistency with related policies. Legal or specialist advice is sought where needed.
4. **Consultation.** Where a change significantly affects members, they are consulted and given a reasonable opportunity to comment before the draft is finalised.
5. **Approval.** Policies and procedures are approved by the ICPHAA Board of Directors and the approval is recorded in the minutes. Guidance and forms may be approved by the Accreditation Department or Registry where the Board has delegated that authority.
6. **Issue.** The approved version is given its version number, effective date and next review date and is published.

House style

- Documents use plain, professional British and Irish English, define any technical terms, and refer to other ICPHAA documents by their exact titles.
- Documents describe ICPHAA accurately as a voluntary, not-for-profit professional association and never as a statutory regulator.
- **One authoritative source for requirements.** Numerical requirements, such as supervision, CPD and practice requirements for each membership category, are stated only in the ICPHAA accreditation requirements published by the Accreditation Department. Other documents refer to those requirements rather than repeating the figures, so that a change needs to be made in only one place.
- Published documents are produced in accessible formats, with alternative formats available on request.

Urgent changes

Where an urgent change is needed to comply with the law or to protect the public, the chair of the Board, with at least one other director, may approve an interim revision. The revision is published with a note that it is interim, and is placed before the full Board for ratification at its next meeting.

6. Publication and communication

The current approved version of every controlled document intended for members or the public is published on the ICPHAA website, www.icphaa.ie. The published version is the authoritative version.

- When a new or substantially revised document is published, members are told what has changed and from when.
- Where a change affects obligations, members are given reasonable notice before it takes effect, unless an earlier date is needed for legal reasons or to protect the public.
- The Registry keeps a register of all current controlled documents, showing for each its reference number, title, version, effective date, next review date and owner. The register may be published so that members can see at a glance which documents are current.
- Printed or downloaded copies are uncontrolled. Anyone using a printed or saved copy should check that it matches the version on the website.

7. Review and revision

Each controlled document is reviewed by its next review date. A document must also be reviewed earlier where:

- the law, statutory regulation or official guidance on which it relies changes;
- experience, including learning from concerns or compliance checks, shows that it is not working as intended;
- the Association's structure or processes change in a way that affects it.

A review considers whether the document is still accurate, lawful and consistent with related ICPHAA documents; whether it is clear to the people who use it; and whether experience since the last review suggests improvements. A review may conclude that no change is needed. In that case the review is recorded and a new review date is set. Where changes are needed, the drafting and approval steps above are followed and the document control table is updated with the new version, date, a short description of the change and the approving body.

8. Withdrawal, archiving and retention

When a document is superseded or withdrawn, it is removed from the website and marked ‘Superseded’ or ‘Withdrawn’ with the date. Superseded and withdrawn versions are kept in a secure archive, not deleted, so that ICPHAA can show which version applied at any point in time, for example when a concern relates to events some time ago. Documents issued before the current policy and procedure framework are superseded by the reissued ICPHAA versions. The archive is kept in line with the ICPHAA retention schedule described in the Legal & Data Governance Policy.

9. Responsibilities and concerns

WHO	RESPONSIBILITY
ICPHAA Board of Directors	Owns this policy; approves policies and procedures; makes sure reviews take place on time.
ICPHAA Registry	Maintains the master register of controlled documents, their versions and review dates; publishes approved versions; maintains the archive.
Accreditation Department	Controls the ICPHAA accreditation requirements and related guidance and forms under this policy.
Everyone who drafts documents	Uses the template, follows the approval steps and never publishes an unapproved version.

Anyone who finds an out-of-date, inconsistent or incorrect ICPHAA document should tell the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie.

10. Monitoring and review

The Registry reports to the Board on documents due or overdue for review. The Board reviews this policy by the date shown on the cover, and earlier if the Association's governance arrangements change.

READ ALONGSIDE

- Records of Decision Policy
- Organisational Governance
- Legal & Data Governance Policy
- Public-Facing Transparency Policy
- Quality Assurance 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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