



IASLT Management of Complaints and Impact on Membership, 2018

Table of Contents.

Section	Page number
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 How to make a complaint about a Speech and Language Therapist	3
3.0 Responsibilities	4
4.0 Implications for IASLT Membership	5
5.0 IASLT Procedure following outcome of CORU's	6
7.0 SLT 'struck off' from CORU register	7
8.0 Action to be taken in the case of a non-IASLT member who requests to join IASLT after being suspended from the CORU register.	8
9.0 Restoration of Membership	8

1.0 Introduction.

The maintenance of a high standard of ethical and professional conduct is essential to all those working in the field of Speech and Language Therapy, both for the welfare of service users and for the reputation of the profession as a whole. Speech and Language Therapists are obliged to maintain and advance their knowledge and keep up with technical progress throughout their careers in order to offer service users the best management available. All registered Speech and Language Therapists are bound by CORU's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Speech and Language Therapists. CORU is the regulatory body in Ireland responsible for regulating the Speech and Language Therapy profession. Their code specifies the standards of ethics, conduct and performance expected of registered Speech and Language Therapists. Failure to adhere this code can result in fitness to practice (FTP) proceedings being implemented.

This document outlines the procedure that IASLT will follow should a member of IASLT be subject to sanctions or is struck off from the CORU register. This document applies to members of IASLT only.

2.0 How to make a complaint about a speech and language therapist;

2.1. Statement of IASLT Position;

The IASLT is the professional body for Speech and Language Therapists. IASLT is not a regulatory body. Speech and Language Therapists are regulated by CORU since October 2016. IASLT does not deal with complaints against members. Complaints may be made to CORU about a member without the knowledge or involvement of IASLT.

2.2. Process for making a complaint about a Speech and Language Therapist

There are a number of avenues in which an individual can make a complaint about a Speech and Language Therapist.

- ✓ If an individual wishes to make a complaint in relation to an individual Speech and Language Therapist, who works in the publicly funded health service or an independent healthcare provider, the individual can complain directly to the individual therapist, their line manager or employing organisation.
- ✓ If you have been seen by a Speech and Language Therapist as a private patient, you should make your complaint directly to the therapist in the first instance (www.healthcomplaints.ie). Healthcomplaints.ie provides information on how to make a complaint or give feedback about health and social care services in Ireland. The website has been developed for people who use health and social care services in Ireland, as well as for their families, care-givers and advocates
- ✓ If you have been seen by a Speech and Language Therapist working with an employing organisation you can complain directly to the Speech and Language Therapist and the Director/Complaints officer of the employing organisation.
- ✓ Complaints may also be made to CORU, which is the regulatory body for Speech and Language Therapists. Complaints may be made directly to CORU without the knowledge or involvement of IASLT. CORU Fitness to Practice proceedings do not replace employers' complaints or disciplinary processes (CORU Guide to Fitness to Practice, 2014).
- ✓ Individuals who contact the IASLT Office wishing to make a complaint about a Speech and Language Therapist may be directed to the websites www.healthcomplaints.ie and www.coru.ie .

3.0 Responsibilities;

It is the responsibility of individual members to declare to the IASLT Insurance Broker 'Glennons Insurance' immediately if they are subject to complaint proceedings within their employing organisation or from CORU.

Reporting of incidents that could give rise to claims against a member should be reported to Glennon's as soon as a member becomes aware of the incident itself. If a member is in any doubt as to whether or not an incident should be reported, they should contact Glennon's for further guidance.

It is a member's responsibility to declare to IASLT if they have been or are currently subject to a complaint when requesting letters of good standing.

IASLT members who are subject to a complaint have a responsibility to;

1. Inform the IASLT Insurance Broker to ensure that insurance is valid and
2. Inform the IASLT of the outcome of the complaints process.

It is the responsibility of the IASLT Office Administrator to;

1. Ensure a record is made of the name of the individual who is subject to complaint in the IASLT membership database.
2. Send a formal letter to inform the member of this with a hard copy record securely and confidentially stored in the IASLT office.
3. Send a formal letter to the member when the sanction is removed/completed.

4.0 Implications for Membership.

IASLT members who are subject to a complaint within their employment or from CORU will retain their full IASLT membership pending the final outcome of the process. The member can access legal advice through the insurance brokers, Glennons.

Their membership status with IASLT will remain intact, unless they are removed by CORU from the registrar. In this case membership of IASLT will also be revoked.

Letters of Good Standing will only be issued by the IASLT Office once the complaint has been resolved.

5.0 IASLT Procedure following outcome of CORU's FTP

5.1 Complaint not proven or upheld

If the complaint is not proven or upheld or if CORU's Preliminary Proceedings Committee decide that a complaint does not warrant further action/investigation the member must contact IASLT and the insurance broker to inform them of the outcome.

The IASLT Administrator will ensure that the record of a complaint made of the individual's name in the IASLT membership database is expunged. The member will be informed.

5.2 Action to be taken in the case of an IASLT member being suspended from the CORU Register or given a 'Conditions of Practice' order

IASLT members given a suspension or conditions of practice order may retain their IASLT professional membership to support them in meeting the requirements set by CORU for the lifting of their suspension.

6.0 CORU Appeal Phase

A registered Speech and Language Therapist has 30 days to appeal to the High Court against a CORU decision about;

- Attaching conditions to registration.
- Suspending registration.
- Cancelling registration.
- Banning a registrant from applying to restore their registration.

The member in question should contact IASLT at the end of the 30-day period, to indicate if an appeal has been lodged with the High Court.

- **If no appeal has been lodged**, the member will be deemed a ‘member not in good standing’ and his/her membership of IASLT will be cancelled.
- **If an appeal has been lodged**, the IASLT Administrator will notify those listed in Section 6.0, this will put the IASLT procedure on hold until the outcome of the appeal is known.

6.1 Monitoring the CORU appeal process

If the appeal is successful the name of the Speech and Language Therapist remains on the register. The SLT should notify the IASLT Chairperson. No further action will then be required.

If the decision to strike off a speech and language therapist from the CORU register is upheld, the IASLT Chairperson should be informed and will notify those at 6.0. The process to remove the member from IASLT membership will be initiated see section 6.1. The record of the non-member will be kept and placed on a ‘barred’ list until they are eligible for re-registration.

7.0 SLT ‘struck off’ from CORU register;

A member of the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists who has their CORU Registration cancelled and who has not successfully appealed the cancellation, would be deemed ‘a member not in good standing’ under the Articles of Association. In this circumstance the following procedure should be followed;

- If the Speech and Language Therapist in question is a member of IASLT then they must formally write to the IASLT Chairperson to inform him/her of this outcome.
- A record is made by the IASLT Administrator of the individual’s name in the IASLT membership database.
- The IASLT Administrator will then inform the following people of the name of the individual and their IASLT membership status:

 IRISH ASSOCIATION OF SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

- IASLT Chairperson.
- IASLT Council
- Professional Development and Ethics Committee
- The member will be informed of all steps carried out in line with the IASLT process.

7.1 Process to remove IASLT Membership.

The IASLT Chairperson will send a letter to the member concerned, notifying him or her that they have been ‘deemed a member not in good standing’ and can no longer be a member of IASLT by virtue of the CORU’s decision and in line with IASLT policy.

8.0 Action to be taken in the case of a non IASLT member who requests to join IASLT after being suspended from the CORU Register

Membership of IASLT will only be available once sanctions or a suspension imposed by CORU are completed successfully. Professional indemnity insurance will be provided in line with IASLT membership categories. However, this would be subject to the details of the incident resulting in the sanction being disclosed to the insurer and upon insurer’s approval to provide cover. This means that any CORU related sanction must be disclosed to the IASLT Professional Indemnity Insurer immediately. For any new member joining with a pre-existing sanction this must be disclosed prior to joining the IASLT.

9.0 Restoration of Membership

Application for restoration of membership of IASLT must be made to IASLT with evidence of re-registration with CORU.