

**SSPA Review of Membership**

**Discussion Paper**

November 2016

# Introduction

The SSPA National Executive has decided to review the approach to membership of SSPA. This includes looking at the membership categories, the cost of membership, and the eligibility for membership. This paper has been written to identify issues for discussion and to seek members’ views, as well as those who might potentially become members or who have a close interest in SSPA’s activities.

Part of the context for the review is SSPA’s strategic plan which includes a goal of increasing and diversifying membership, as well as providing real value to members. The other key issue is the changing pattern of social service provision and funding by government agencies

## Terms of reference

The review will consider the following matters:

* Review and propose membership categories that better reflect the diversity of organisations, members’ needs and abilities to contribute
* Enable a wide range of organisations to join SSPA
* Mechanisms that enable the recruitment of new members
* Review the current membership proposition, to ensure clarity and value of benefits as well as understanding of expectations of what is required from members
* Propose a membership fee structure that is seen as fair, and that at least sustains current levels of income from members

## Expected outputs and timeframe

1. Discussion document to be used as the basis for consultation with members and potential members by end of October 2016
2. Discussion with members from November onwards, including survey in February 2017
3. Membership proposition paper, including options and recommendations on:

* Membership category definitions
* Membership fee structure
* Membership value offer
* Areas for membership recruitment/attrition
* Any Rule changes needed to give effect to the proposed changes
* Any implementation matters and a proposed timeline
* A communications plan

Timeframe: Interim report April 2017. Final report May 2017

## Current position

### Types of membership

The SSPA Rules define who may be a member in one of two categories:

**Section 5 Membership**

Membership shall be open to any service approved by the Chief Executive in accordance with sections 396 and 403 of the Act or any non-government service provider which has a contract with the Ministry of Social Development.

Associate membership shall be open to any other Service Provider and to groups, societies or associations which may hold a current, relevant government contract and which in the sole discretion of the National Executive has compatible objectives to the Association.

**Section 6 Admission to Membership**

Applicants for membership shall complete an application form provided by the National Executive and supply such information including evidence of contract and/or accreditation with MSD or other information as may be required by the National Executive.

Membership applications shall be considered by the National Executive.

The National Executive shall have discretion whether or not to admit a membership applicant, and shall advise the applicant of its decision.

Membership is subject to the provisions of clause 8. (*Section 8 refers to termination of membership, including if a provider’s Approval is suspended or revoked by MSD*.)

Members are organisations, not individual, and admission to membership is at the discretion of the National Executive.

Full membership is open to those who hold a current Approval from MSD and a current contract with MSD. Associate membership has a wider scope and currently includes training organisations, community development and support organisations, and providers with a key focus in other sectors such as health.

Only full members may vote for National Executive members and on any issues raised at the AGM. Only people working for or in a governance role for a full member may be a National Executive member. Other than these matters, there is little distinction between members and associate members as regards their membership of SSPA. For example, both are able to attend workshops and conferences and are charged the same amount, and all members, full and associate, receive information and are invited to contribute.

### Current cost of membership

Membership costs:

* $50 p.a. for organisations with a budget under $250,000
* $75 p.a. for budgets between $250,000 and $1 million
* $100 p.a. in excess of $1 million

For associate members, the equivalent figures are $45, $70, $95.

SSPA’s income from fees is under $10,000 annually and only covers about 3% of SSPA’s expenses. Fees are set by the National Executive and must be notified to members.

### Regions

SSPA has members across the country. For mainly administrative purposes, there are 13 defined geographic regions, some of which have very small numbers of members.

The regions have no formal standing – they do not have a basis in the Rules and do not provide the basis of representation on the Executive. Regional activity is largely self-generating, other than training where workshops and best practice seminars are delivered in various centres, depending on the type of training and other factors, such as training provider cost.

## Consultation on this discussion document

The next section discusses several key issues and poses specific questions. Members, and others invited to participate, are encouraged to raise additional issues beyond those identified here. A survey of members will be held in February 2017.

Any feedback on the issues raised in this paper is welcome. Please send your comments by **Wednesday** **21 December** to

SSPA, PO Box 9490, Marion Sq, Wellington 6141 or by email to [manager@sspa.org.nz](mailto:manager@sspa.org.nz)

You can either fill in your comments in the boxes below each question, or just send us an email with your thoughts.

# Issue 1: What categories of membership should we have?

SSPA’s current membership categories are simple and straightforward, being limited to certain types of organisations. While this provides clarity, it also imposes limitations and a lack of flexibility. Some specific issues for consideration are:

* The membership categories work well for stand-alone organisations but do not readily lend themselves to organisations which have branches or regional offices and wish to affiliate as whole organisations. Currently, each unit must join separately if they want to receive information at the individual branches and to have a vote. While this may suit some organisations, there have been representations for a whole-of-organisation membership too. The fee structure may need to reflect any changes in this area.
* The differentiation between full members and associate members may be unhelpful, given the changing pattern of service delivery for children and families, and the changing nature of funding of those services. For further discussion on this, see Issue 2.
* SSPA is unable to accept membership applications from individuals, even as associate members. There is a network of independent contractors that work in the social services sector and there may be value for them in connecting into the SSPA network, as well as academics and researchers working in the social services area. If SSPA was to consider an individual membership category, it will need to ensure this is limited only to people who do not work in organisations that are or could be SSPA members.
* SSPA cannot provide quality assurance for the services provided by its members; however this is addressed via members’ audited contractual relationships with Government.
* Student membership may be worth considering, to give access to current networks and to build future participation. It will be important for SSPA not to undermine ANZASW’s student membership.

**Categories of membership: Questions for consideration:**

* 1. Should there be easier provision for national or regional organisations with multiple branches or regions to affiliate as a single organisation and participate in SSPA directly?
  2. Should membership be open to individuals, not just organisations?
  3. Should SSPA continue with separate categories for members and associate members?
  4. If Associate members do not have contracts with Government, how will matters of quality assurance be addressed?
  5. Are there any other issues to be considered about membership categories?

# Issue 2: Should membership of SSPA continue to be focused on providers under the CYPF Act

SSPA’s current membership focus is on providers accredited under sections 396 and 403 of the CYPF Act who are also contracted to deliver services funded by MSD. This enables a specialist focus for SSPA and its members and the ability to focus expertise in information, advice, training and advocacy.

On the other hand, the relatively narrow and specific focus of CYPF Act means that the ‘catchment’ of providers is limited and has the effect of limiting growth, especially at a time when MSD is consolidating its provider pool and a number of providers are looking to amalgamation as a sustainable future path.

Information provided in the recent membership renewal indicates that, as well as MSD, members get funding from a range of government agencies, including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, District Health Boards and the Ministry of Education and Whanau Ora commissioning agents. Whanau Ora is an increasingly significant funder, especially of services to Māori. SSPA intends to grow its membership amongst Māori providers so this is a consideration for the membership review.

Changes are underway in MSD, including the establishment from April 2017 of the new Ministry for Vulnerable Children Oranga Tamariki. The impact on Community Investment is, as yet, unknown, but may mean that the services provided by SSPA members are funded from two separate departmental Votes, with some programmes remaining in and funded by MSD and others, relating to vulnerable children, moving to and funded by the Ministry for Vulnerable Children Oranga Tamariki.

All these developments raise questions about the scope of SSPA’s membership. The SSPA Rules provide for a focus on children and families but many current providers have a wider focus across communities and population groups other than children and their families. Similarly, the question arises of whether MSD approval and contracting should continue to be the litmus test (assuming this will in future also mean contracting from Oranga Tamariki).

This discussion would also impact on the categories of member and associate member. SSPA has 24 associate members; the rest are full members. The associate member category is intended for providers with some alignment to SSPA but not contracted by MSD.

**Focus of Membership: Questions for consideration:**

2.1 Is the current focus on providers who deliver services under the CYPF Act still the right one?

2.2 Is the current stated focus on children and family appropriate when many members also serve youth, independent adults and elderly?

2.3 If the focus was broadened, how should it be defined?

2.4 In relation to membership, what considerations are there for ensuring SSPA is a place that Māori providers wish to be part of?

2.5 Should SSPA consider the options of creating a Treaty partnership model?

2.6 How should SSPA differentiate itself from other sector groups in the social services area?

2.7 Should the categories of member and associate member be retained in their current form?

2.8 Are there any other issues to be considered about the scope of SSPA membership?

# Issue 3: What level of fee is appropriate

### Current cost of membership

Membership costs:

* $50 p.a. for organisations with a budget under $250,000
* $75 p.a. for budgets between $250,000 and $1 million
* $100 p.a. in excess of $1 million

For associate members, the equivalent figures are $45, $70, $95.

Members receive the following benefits for these fees: access to reasonably priced training and an annual national conference at a discounted fee that is lower than non-members pay; communication via newsletters and updates, advocacy for the sector via submissions to Parliament, connections and networks with other providers.

**Fee structure in other similar organisations**

We looked at the cost and structure of membership of similar bodies that represent member organisations. Some examples:

Community Networks Aotearoa $50 full membership, $25 associate membership

Hui E $1000 for affiliates (and higher rates for support)

Platform Trust $500

NZ Disability Support Network Full membership: sliding scale depending on income from $250 to $6000. $350 for associate membership, and $100 for ‘friends’

Inclusive NZ $800 for members, $350 for associates, $500 for business or corporate members, $75 for individuals

TOAH-NNEST Free to join

(Sexual Violence network)

The ‘benefit’ package is different for each, although information, publications and conferences are common to all, along with an advocacy function representing members’ interests to government. In most cases, detailed information, such as best practice guidelines, are available to members only.

**Membership Fees: Questions for consideration:**

* 1. What additional benefits would you expect to get from membership if the annual fee was set higher?
  2. Is the current level of differentiation based on budget set at the right level?
  3. If SSPA allowed individual members, what’s an appropriate fee?
  4. Are there any other issues you would like to raise about the level and structure of SSPA fees?

Are there any other issues you’d like to raise?

Thank you for giving us your views.