



**The International Federation of  
Professional Aromatherapists**

**Strategic Business Plan**

**2010/2013**

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# **International Federation of Professional Aromatherapists**

## **IFPA**

### **Strategic Business Plan**

**2010-2013**

#### **Executive Summary**

This business plan is the first of its kind and the IFPA board of Trustees were keen to establish a framework for its future direction not only for its members but for major stakeholders and those associated with the IFPA. The plan sets out the history of its inception, its guiding principles, how its governing body works and the eligibility for membership. The foundations and quality of education and training are clearly visible and it is this high standard which has been recognised globally. The internal appraisal process gives the Trustees a clear vision to develop this plan and its aims and objectives are based on decisions from highly qualified and respected board members. The key objectives centre on the main areas of business of the federation, protection of membership services, high education standards, good governance, an international focus and maintaining the infrastructure to support business activities. Key to the many long terms objectives is the financial stability and availability of funds to support future work. An annual review will identify financial projections in order to support ongoing work.

## **Introduction**

The International Federation of Professional Aromatherapists (IFPA) was officially born on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2002, the result of a dream conceived by the UK's major international professional aromatherapy organizations.

Members of the International Federation of Aromatherapists (IFA), the International Society of Professional Aromatherapists (ISPA) and the Register of Qualified Aromatherapists (RQA) worked tirelessly together for over two years to bring their organisations together in a united effort which would immeasurably benefit the future of professional aromatherapy both in the UK and abroad.

The merger planning process was directed by a steering committee made up of the chairs and vice chairs of each association. In addition, members of the three executive committees/councils also played a vital role working on a wide range of issues including the constitution, administration, education and training, public relations, insurance and publications. Everyone involved worked hard to make the amalgamation process progress as smoothly as possible, and produce the most positive possible outcome both for IFPA's practicing members and the general public. The outcome of this work resulted in the ISPA and the RQA amalgamating to form the IFPA and the IFA continuing in its own right.

Working together in a spirit of unity to lay the foundations for what has become the premier UK and international professional body of aromatherapy, the IFPA planned to strengthen ties and exchange information with national aromatherapy bodies in the UK and also establish closer links with aromatherapy organisations and practitioners abroad. It was felt by all concerned that if this unique opportunity to work together was seized; professional aromatherapy could be established on a global scale as a viable, respected system of modern natural medicine.

## 1. Governance of the IFPA

The IFPA believes that professional aromatherapists have the right to be represented by a council that operates a transparent supportive mechanism for its members and for the profession as a whole.

The IFPA Council meet bi-monthly and also hold telephone conferences in between Council meetings, so that IFPA matters can be discussed and dealt with swiftly, efficiently and in the most cost effective way. The IFPA continues to perform its key functions, its new and future work by its governing Council body. This is made up of 12 trustees who work on a voluntary basis in a number of key roles.

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Education Chair
- Accreditation chair
- Research chair
- Publicity & Public relations chair
- Conference chair
- Membership chair
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Council are supported by IFPA staff in the Head Office with

- Office Manager
- Membership Secretary
- Accounts Officer
- Marketing & Conference Administrator

The IFPA continues to strengthen ties with other complementary and alternative medicine organisations as well as the Department of Health, and also has an interest in the new Integrated Health Care Trust in the UK and is taking the initiative to work together on a more global scale as aromatherapy continues to be one of the fastest growing complementary therapies. It is committed to the future regulation of the profession and strives to work with other organisations that share that vision in order to protect the public and its members.

Membership to the IFPA Council requires its Council members to be Trustees of the Federation and admittance is in accordance with the Articles of Association of the Federation. Council is open to any individual who meets the professional standards set out by Council for the practice of aromatherapy. For the purposes of Charity law, Council members take on 'Trustee' status, acting in the best interest of the Charity and its aims.

Meetings – Trustees are required to attend meetings throughout the year; one of those should be the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Meetings take place at the Hinckley office every 2 months.

Appointments - Applications for Council elections will be 40 days prior to the AGM for membership voting. Appointments are for 2 years, but retiring Council members may stand for re-election. Council may appoint a person to fill any vacancy on Council until the next AGM when they cease to be in that role unless re-appointed by the election process.

Council members are elected first as Trustees and then into a role. There is lots of shared work, debates, discussion and decisions made in a most collegiate and professional way. All council members work for the Federation on a voluntary basis. This is well respected amongst other members of Council and office staff. In compliance with Charity aims and Trustee responsibilities, the federation encourages Trustees to:

- ensure that the IFPA complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations;
- be aware of and conform to the responsibilities of a charitable trustee and of a director of a company limited by guarantee;
- ensure that IFPA pursues its objects as defined in its governing document;
- ensure the IFPA applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects (the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are);
- attend Council meetings, contributing to its role in giving firm strategic direction to the IFPA, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets; ensuring decisions are implemented and that the work is consistent with the mission and values of the IFPA;
- safeguard the good name and values of the IFPA ;
- ensure the effective and efficient administration of the IFPA;
- help to ensure the financial stability of the IFPA;
- protect and manage the property of the IFPA and ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds;
- ensure that professional independent advice is taken by the IFPA when necessary;

- be aware of other Chairs roles and responsibilities ;
- work closely with other chairs' on IFPA/council plans, strategies, new initiatives;
- Being aware of health and safety, fire and risk around the HQ;
- maintain up to date job descriptions;
- produce annual targets and undertake annual appraisals;
- work with all IFPA policies and procedures;
- provide professional advice and support to members where applicable, in a non-judgmental, sensitive way and reasonable time scale;
- encourage professionalism with members via regional group activity, conference networking and IT communications;
- maintain own credibility in the public arena, updating and submitting professional CPD evidence as required for IFPA membership.

## **2. Membership**

IFPA members recognise the value of being part of a professional organisation, which has high standards of education and training and which then, benefits the public. Public protection and safety are paramount and we ensure that all our members work with the utmost credibility in the field of Aromatherapy.

Membership of the organisation requires that the IFPA standards set out for education and training are met. Evidence of professional qualifications must be submitted as part of applications.

Being an IFPA member demonstrates commitment to maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards for the practice of Aromatherapy and to the ongoing development of the Aromatherapy profession worldwide.

Membership provides a number of different benefits, which are continuously being sought on member's behalf.

Benefits include:

- listing on a professional register for Full and International practicing members, which is available to the public and other professional organisations
- listing on the "Find A Therapist" page on the IFPA website
- excellent quarterly professional journal "In Essence" for all members

- comprehensive, low-cost insurance cover for members under the IFPA block scheme administered by Balens Ltd
- access to the latest research related to Aromatherapy and CAM
- annual conference organized by IFPA
- network of IFPA affiliated regional groups providing support and networking opportunities
- CPD course listings offered by IFPA approved training providers
- access to research, annual research and case study awards
- enamel membership badge given to all Full and International members upon joining the IFPA
- advice and information provided by IFPA Council and office.

There are a number of membership categories for practitioners and non-practitioners alike, enabling everyone who so wishes to be part of this thriving organisation.

### **3. Quality Standards in Education and Training**

Since its inception in 2002 the IFPA has been committed to the promotion of aromatherapy as a health care discipline via an education programme that is core to the philosophy of the organisation. The IFPA believes that education is key to the future of aromatherapy and as such actively supports the provision of nationally accepted standards and works with its schools to ensure these standards are met and maintained.

Via education, the IFPA ensures that any individual who undertakes training within an IFPA accredited scheme will qualify to an approved standard that not only meets but also exceeds National Training Standards. Such a recognised qualification will enable them to seek employment.

Within aromatherapy education there are several differing standards and awarding bodies. However any student who completes an IFPA approved course can be assured that they will meet the criteria required for registration with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) and any other recognised regulatory bodies. The IFPA is committed to supporting regulation of the aromatherapy profession; this is currently a voluntary self regulatory structure which endeavours to provide optimal public protection with corresponding practitioner benefit. The IFPA would support future moves toward statutory regulation should this become a viable option. Regulation of CAM professions is important for clinical governance, in line with government reports over the last decade and the IFPA

supports the regulation of multi- professional care to assure a safe and high quality experience for patients considered in reports such as Trust, Assurance and Safety - The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, (2007)

#### **4. IFPA services**

- maintaining a register of practicing members whose services are available to the public and other professional organisations, through advertising, announcements, the IFPA website, the quarterly journal and upon requests
- providing well-founded insurance cover for members, embracing professional indemnity & malpractice, public liability, selling formulated aromatherapy products and any other protection that may be deemed necessary
- maintaining a list of education and training providers offering professional courses in aromatherapy, therapeutic massage and bodywork and that that these are recognised by the IFPA as providing a standard for IFPA membership
- publishing a professional journal and organising an annual conference
- supporting and encouraging scientific research applicable to the field of aromatherapy and its practice
- establishing and publicising complaints procedures
- establishing an educational fund to assist in education and training, supporting educational ventures and activities in the UK and overseas.

#### **5. Core principles**

The IFPA's vision is to be a strong voice for aromatherapy. Our mission is to maintain ourselves as one of the largest aromatherapy organisations in the world. The prevailing aim is to promote its philosophy of holistic health and healthcare and improve, maintain and develop standards in aromatherapy education, research and practice, becoming the best it can be. The IFPA supports the ongoing move toward the integration of therapies such as aromatherapy into healthcare delivery, and continued growth of access within the NHS. For several years now GPs have been able to refer patients to complementary therapists and the IFPA supports this model. Recent white papers such as 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' (DH 2010) and Healthy Lives, Healthy People (DH 2010) potentially provide funding opportunities for greater holistic care in primary care. The IFPA supports the concept of health and wellbeing throughout life and equitable access for all.

## **6. Internal Appraisal of the Federation**

The purpose of the appraisal was to review the 'health status' of the organisation, to review its performance, targets and constraints within the last 12 months. This is the first time a strategic/business plan has been undertaken, therefore no previous documents are available. It would seem to be good governance practice and transparency in a changing organisation.

This section reviews achievements over a 12 month period

- a collaborative Operational Policy and Actions for 2009/10
- individual Council/Trustee member achievements;
- achievements by the employed administrative staff of the IFPA.

The achievements are set out under main headings and not on an individual performance basis. They are set out clearly, sourced and referenced from action plans, council reports, auditor reviews, financial projections and corporate development needs.

In 2009 Council identified many of its goals and objectives for the year ahead based on the financial status and the annual audit review in order to ensure stability for the future. A number of immediate actions were put in place to address any inconsistencies which also required many policies and procedures to be reviewed. Many of the actions were based on maintaining membership services whilst working within a stricter budget and increasing revenue.

The position was reviewed in 2010 and progress for the future plan agreed by Council.

**7. Strategic Direction:** The overall aims for the IFPA are to:

**7.1** Maintain a competitive advantage in the field of aromatherapy;

**7.2** capitalize on networking opportunities and promote the work of the IFPA in the wider arena of CAM, utilizing the In Essence journal, annual conferences and marketing in the wider sense;

**7.3** maintain quality accreditation systems in order to continue to provide high education and training standards within IFPA schools and centres;

**7.4.** increase membership and membership services, providing value for money for all IFPA members;

**7.5** sustain and improve upon a framework for continuing professional development and support for qualified aromatherapists;

**7.6** secure a recruitment programme to increase membership and accreditation of schools from overseas and to maintain and secure international links and support for current overseas members;

**7.7** maintain and secure a governance strategy which allows the IFPA to proceed in business in an ethical and legal manner;

**7.8** sustain a stable financial position for the future in order to proceed with short and long term objectives;

**7.9** develop models for succession of Trustees and the encouragement of new board members in order to sustain a workable Council for the future;

**7.10** maintain and improve links with government, regulatory and research bodies to establish the IFPA on the stage of CAM.

**7.11** develop a stronger research focus and become a major stakeholder in the future of aromatherapy and CAM research;

**7.12** consider a plan to work with other aromatherapy associations to develop one unity and one voice for aromatherapy;

**7.13** maintain up to date administrative systems, enabling IFPA staff to work effectively and efficiently for the future.

## **8.0 Strategic objectives:**

In order to meet the federations aims the following objectives have been set.

**8.1** (i) to promote the federation with new corporate literature to the public and other bodies who are associated with the IFPA;

(ii) to capitalise on advertising, conferences, trade exhibitions to enhance the image of the IFPA;

(iii) to form greater alliances with other aromatherapy associations worldwide;

**8.2** enhance the access and delegate numbers to annual conference;

**8.3** establish the electronic submission of accreditation documents to continue developing and monitoring CPD provision;

**8.4** monitor the governance of the IFPA by:

(i) reviewing all the articles of the Federation in line with good governance

(ii) monitoring codes of conducts for Trustees;

(iii) exploring and working towards employment of paid Chief Executive Officer;

**8.5** to increase membership

(i) increase the exposure of the membership to the public, other CAM practitioners and trade organisations;

(ii) increase membership benefits;

(iii) proposed increase in student member's fees;

(iv) make appropriate change to the membership categories, enhancing eligibility for membership to the federation, with membership restrictions;

(v) develop an overseas recruitment strategy in schools and the wider community;

**8.6** Review the IFPA's position with other associations in the field of aromatherapy and CAM to work towards one voice for aromatherapy;

**8.7** review educational standards with the wider CAM community, voluntary regulators and relevant health and government departments;

**8.8** maintain contact and networking with CAM associations, regulatory bodies and health departments;

**8.9** research

(i) increase access to research for members, exploring a range of online library and data base facilities in the most cost effective way for members;

(ii) maintain links with research bodies in the UK.

#### **8.10 international strategy:**

- (i) enhance support for overseas members;
- (ii) increase membership from these countries where IFPA schools exist and encourage membership from other therapists in the field of CAM;
- (iii) encourage the promotion of IFPA standards of aromatherapy and the sharing of ongoing knowledge and practice;
- (iv) support the conference agenda overseas considering greater web links and recordings;
- (v) explore and work towards the paid consultancy role for all IFPA accreditation.

#### **8.11 business and administrative structures**

- (i) maintain a suitable work environment for all staff;
- (ii) upgrade office equipment in line with office manager proposals;
- (iii) develop effective IT and software system to balance workloads;
- (iv) to maintain employer responsibilities to staff in a legal and ethical way.

#### **8.12 Financial structures**

- (i) develop flexible payment models for members paying subscriptions;
- (ii) develop new ways of flexible insurance payments for members;
- (iii) review financial position in relation to salaried CEO and accreditation role.

### **9.0 Financial Review**

**9.1** For the purpose of this business plan for the next 3 years the planning prospects will be based on the audited accounts for 2010-2011 and annual accounts thereafter and the cash flow projections to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 and thereafter. The annual financial statements are prepared and presented to the board of Trustees (directors) by Cunningtons, Chartered Certified Accountants and Registered Auditors, based in Leicester, UK. The reports are prepared in accordance with the special provision of part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. These accounts are approved by the board at the AGM each year.

Expenditure year on year primarily relates to staff salaries, IFPA operating costs and Trustee reimbursement costs. Turn over year on year relates mainly to income from members' subscriptions, annual conference, school accreditation fees and gift aid. Other elements which affect profit and loss relate to current assets, depreciation and company liabilities. A full set of accounts are available on the IFPA web site each year.





