



ACC REGISTER ADVISORY PANEL (RAP) MEETING

Sutton Surrey

Friday 12th January 2018

1.00pm – 5.00pm

Minutes of Meeting

Attendees

Independent.

Catherine Clarke, Chair RAP

Doreen Rowlands, Lay member RAP

Heather Churchill, Lay member RAP

ACC

Tony Ruddle, Executive Chair ACC

Kathy Spooner, ACC Director of Counselling

Dawn Sherry, ACC Registrar

Apologies

None

1. Notes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting (22/09/17) were accepted as a true record by the new chair of the RAP panel.

DS will take the minutes at the RAP Panel meetings. These will be sent to CC for approval before circulation to members.

A redacted (as appropriate) version of the agreed minutes will be drafted by TR/KS for members of the general public and sent to CC for approval. Once approved these will be placed on the ACC

website.

The actions from the minutes dated 22nd September 2017 have been dealt with: see below.

Tony Ruddle: To create a sub directory in the ACC SharePoint Drive and set up security access to this directory for members of the RAP – **Action Completed**

To place relevant documents in this subdirectory, including the original ACC submission to the PSA, document about the formation of RAP and the ACC most recent account statements – **Action Completed**

To advise the PSA Accreditation team that both KS and TR should receive all notifications of change – **Action Completed**

To place the current risk register in the SharePoint directory for panel members to access – **Action Completed**

Kathy Spooner: To check original ACC PSA register application to check whether RAP TOR were specified and how these relate to the current draft – **Action Completed**

To provide details of the monitoring and auditing processes for CPD and Supervision – **Action Completed**

To update TOR with the agreed changes and to recirculate – **Action Completed**

To make the plans for the programme of work for the year ahead available once agreed – **Action Completed**

RAP Panel: All 3 independent members of RAP to access and review the existing Complaints Procedure and Indicative Sanctions document on the ACC website – **Action Completed**

2. Review of revised TOR

KS had been through the information from the PSA to produce a document (Notes on the Terms of Reference of RAP) which summaries the written agreements between the PSA and the ACC as to the roles and responsibilities of RAP. KS updated the draft TOR with the changes agreed at the last meeting.

The RAP Panel reviewed the TOR again in relation to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the document and it was agreed that KS would make specific changes arising from the meeting and also incorporate anything from the Summary of Key Points in the document that is not included in the current draft TOR.

Specific changes:

Make clear the distinction under Members between voting and non voting

Board to be replaced by Panel

Paragraph 3) The Chair is responsible for preparing an independent report on an annual basis that will be submitted to ACC's Board and form part of the Professional Standards Authority annual accreditation renewal reporting

Paragraph 6) Replace with: Voting and non voting members or where agreed a substitute will normally be required to attend all meetings.

Paragraph 7) Replace 'necessary' with appropriate, and insert ACC before "staff or"

Paragraph 8) A quorum shall be three voting members

Paragraph 10) Replace with: The Register Advisory Panel shall confirm an agreed written record of each of their meetings, of which a redacted version, excluding confidential information, will be published on the ACC website

In summary section

To incorporate as agreed any additional responsibilities identified by KS when reviewing PSA/ACC documentation with reference to the PSA Standards for the Accredited register and the roles and responsibilities of the panel.

To add review of the TOR on an annual basis; to have an annual summary of audit activity and outcomes from the Registrar (in September) and that any changes to RAP panel to be notified to ACC members.

To correct date to 2018

Action KS: To make the recommended changes and send out to RAP to review and comment on.

The PSA are introducing a revised register accreditation renewal process in 2018. The idea is that the PSA accreditation team will gather information to pre-populate the ACC submission. As is stated in the TOR the chair of the RAP Panel (CC) must write an annual report to the PSA. This can be sent directly to the PSA or through ACC as part of their submission. This report needs to be completed by the middle of April 2018 as the accreditation renewal date is the end of May.

Action: KS to contact the PSA for the revised template for renewal of the ACC application for registration.

A PSA requirement for the RAP is to have greater diversity in its membership. We need to attract one or two new members from diverse cultures, disabilities and race. How can we recruit members from outside of ACC? It was suggested that one way is to expand our network. What criteria do we want? It was agreed that we wanted RAP Panel members who have a sympathy / understanding of the Christian Faith.

Actions:

DR to investigate criteria used by other Christian organisations when seeking to recruit people who will be sympathetic to its Christian foundations and statement of faith.

KS – to draft criteria for membership to share with prospective new panel members

3. Ethics & Practice Document

The RAP Panel asked when the revised edition of the ACC Ethics & Practice document will be available.

The review of the ACC Ethics & Practice document is being reviewed internally. ACC are waiting for any amendments to be made and the report should be completed in 2019.

4. Review of CPD audit and supervision audit processes

At present 20% of register renewals are chosen for audit. Registered members are selected on a random basis. At present this is a manual process as ACC do not have software that can facilitate this selection. DS keeps a record of those audited to ensure that they are not re-selected during a five year period.

5% of new registrants applying to go on the ACC register are chosen for audit. This is a random selection (as outlined above).

The RAP Panel commented that 20% seemed to be a high standard to set. They suggested that the ACC Board may wish to consider reducing that target to 10% of renewals per month.

Action: KS/TR to put this proposal to the ACC Board for discussion and approval

HC asked if the wording on the audit form in section 2a and 2b could be changed to ensure that it is inclusive for members who are not currently part of a Church fellowship. There are times in many Christian experiences where belonging to a Christian church or fellowship becomes problematic for a number of reasons. The recommendation is that ACC's accreditation committee think of an alternative form of wording that allows for the 'Confirmation' to come from a Christian character witness rather than a Church fellowship leader.

Action: KS to inform the Accreditation Committee of this recommendation

There was discussion about whether signatures were required on the document (as the forms are in electronic format and are e mailed out to members who are encouraged to e-mail them back. It was suggested that the forms did need a declaration from the member, positioned so that it is less likely to be missed (as is the current experience).

Action: KS to inform the Accreditation Committee of this recommendation

The draft audit of supervision document was given out. This is a work in progress and as such the decision was taken on TR recommendation that it needs to be reviewed internally before being presented formally to RAP.

There was a general discussion about audit and how the profession is moving towards a less taxing audit framework (for example it is not required by other professional bodies to submit logs, other than high level contextual summaries of work done in different settings).

Action: HR to provide some examples from her professional role

Action: KS to share with the accreditation committee these reflections/recommendations

5. Issues / changes since last meeting

- (a) Members can join the register whilst on a practice break if required. They will not need to be in supervision or have in date insurance. They will have a register number and be shown on the website under the Register section as “on a practice break” Their details will not be shown on the ACC “Find A Counsellor” (FAC) facility. When they resume work, they need to inform ACC registrar and have insurance and supervision in place. The PSA have been informed of this intention and believe it to be a reasonable decision which has been adopted by other register holders.
- (b) ACC members will be able to join the ACC register via the transfer route from other professional bodies ACC approve. It will be classed as equivalence. Members wishing to use this transfer route will be members of the professional body and have either a Level 4 Qualification or Accreditation with that body. This is for BACP, UKCP, COSCA. These routes are available for members of the public to see on the website.
- (c) NARIC – UK is a body that can check out qualifications attained abroad, and they can translate academic qualifications into English. ACC will reserve the right to request that an applicant for the register whose qualifications cannot be verified through the standard means available, to apply to NARIC-UK at their own expense for a certificate of equivalence. This will cost the member a fee of circa £60 but can be used for similar purposes with other organisations.
- (d) KS brought to the panel’s attention as is required an application for membership with an unspent criminal conviction. The applicant was applying for student rather than for registered membership very soon after KS had commenced working at ACC. Having been informed of the circumstances giving rise to the conviction and having sight of a letter of acceptance for the student from his/her training organisation – KS judged the risk as negligible. KS apologised for not knowing the protocol.

There was a general discussion about how ACC should respond to registrant applicants with unspent convictions. It was recommended that ACC should establish an internal panel to assess the risk made up of TR, KS and a third person. It was also recommended that the risk register be reviewed to ensure that it covers this risk (ie registrants with unspent convictions being assessed as to their suitability to work with vulnerable adults and children)

Otherwise the panel was content with the changes that have been introduced.

Actions:

TR to consider who would be appropriate to include in an internal risk panel to rule on unspent convictions.

TR to review the risk matrix to ensure that this risk is adequately described and mitigated against. (The header of the risk matrix needs to be updated)

7. Complaints

Reporting

ACC has not received any complaints for 15½ months. There were some enquiries, but they were not proceeded with.

ACC has 4 near miss reports. Near miss reporting is an internal process where ACC capture anything that they are made aware of that could lead to complaint in the future. This initiative has received a commendation from the PSA. These reports are available for review (as they are anonymised) and mitigating actions are considered. The current mitigating action is to consider issuing guidelines for good practice in counselling that incorporates Christianity/Spirituality within therapy. HR spoke about the importance of having an 'explicit shared understanding' between counsellor and client.

Overall the panel reported that after review they found that the ACC complaints process was good.

There was some discussion about the length of time that complaints may be brought against a counsellor. The current ACC guidelines are for two years (with an assumption that this is from the end of counselling). TR spoke about how time limits for complaints involving historic abuse needed to be flexible, citing a recent pre-complaint that he had received. HR suggested that ACC may want to consider extending the standard time frame allowed to 3 years. The rationale for this suggestion was that often it took considerable time and further therapy for a client to come to a position where they felt ready to make a complaint.

Actions: TR to consider the proposal for extending the time allowed to make a complaint to three years. TR to consider making explicit that the time starts from the end of counselling.

HC had a query on Point 4.13 of the ACC complaints procedure. It says the complainant is informed of the outcome of the complaint, after which it is referred to RAP. HC suggested that this sequence may need altering to ensure that RAP were made aware of the outcome of the complaint and could therefore effectively comment on it *before* it was presented to the complainant. TR explained that in effect this would happen as he would be keeping the chair of RAP informed through the process of the complaint.

Action: TR to consider amending the complaints process so that the outcome is shared with RAP and then the complainant.

There was some discussion about how much detail of complaints was required to be divulged from the Chair of ACC. There is a balance between the panel knowing enough to be able to offer informed support and advice and its being provided with detailed personal information relating to specific individuals which Panel members may not consider appropriate for the panel to discuss.

HC also asked about Point 4.1 – ACC offers support to the complainant and the person accused if required. Is this correct? TR answered the question in full saying ACC will provide support from a member local to them if required. HC recommended that if we did not advertise this as a benefit we should consider doing so.

Action: KS to check that this is listed on ACC's website as a benefit of membership.

8. Risk Matrix

This was submitted first in 2016. TR has revised and updated it as and when needed and specifically for the 2018 PSA submission. TR explained that the first column refers to global risks to the profession that apply to all counselling register holders. The following columns apply these same risks to ACC and allow for local mitigating factors and a re-calibration of the risk as it applies to ACC. TR will be taking this to ACC's Board for comments and will incorporate suggested amendments, as they are received and as appropriate. [KS has submitted her additions to the risk matrix]. It is available for the RAP Panel on SharePoint. The RAP Panel asked that criminal convictions are added/reviewed as appropriate (see earlier action).

Actions:

RAP Panel are invited to review the matrix in the RAP external drive and make any comments/suggested amendments to TR.

TR: Amended risk matrix to be available for the Panels review at the time of the next meeting, in good time for submission to the PSA as part of the annual accreditation review.

[As previously stated the header needs amending]

9. Review of planned work relating to PSA accreditation

KS provided an extract from the ACC strategic plan that outlined the work required for compliance with PSA commitments and general good practice initiatives. These include updating the knowledge base – good practice in Christian counselling, an explicit shared understanding of what the client / counsellor expects all the way through the counselling process and a review of ethics and standards.

KS has a lot of work to complete balancing promotional and operational/professional responsibilities, so may not meet the deadlines that have been set down/

AOB – There was no other business

DONM – 13th April 2018

The meeting finished at 5.00pm