

Minutes of Register Advisory Panel

Friday 22 September 2023

Attendance (Online – Zoom)

Catherine Clarke Solicitor (England & Wales) (CC) – Chair RAP
Doreen Rowland OBE (DR) Independent
Fiona Stevenson (FS) Independent
Dr Heather Churchill (HC) Professional
Revd Dr Richard Needle (RN) Independent
Tim Warren (TW) Independent
Sue Monckton-Rickett (SMR) ACC Chair
Kathy Spooner (KS) ACC CEO
Gillian Stuart (GS) ACC Head of Membership Services
Sarah Palmer (SP) ACC Administrator
Chris Williams (CW) ACC Board Observer

Apologies

None

1. Welcome and apologies

CC welcomed Chris Williams, ACC Board Observer, to the meeting. Members of RAP introduced themselves to Chris, and Chris introduced himself to those of RAP who do not know him.

2. Opening prayer

Sue opened the meeting with a short reflection and prayer.

3. Conflict of interests

HC declared that Haven Brentwood and Bereavement Service have approached her to join their Board of Trustees. Also, that Waverley Abbey have asked HC to approach ACC to ask about training needs for SCoPEd. CW and TW play sport together occasionally. There were no further declarations.

CC thanked Tim for finding a declaration of interest form, and KS for all her work with the declaration of interest form and all the other standards documents that will be discussed later in the meeting.

4. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

CC raised the point that the notes state that the new EDI standard is due to come into force in September and queried whether that's still the time frame the PSA are working towards. KS stated that ACC, have been asked to a return by the beginning of October stating how we meet the standard at the moment.

CC asked if there was an update on the Deputy Registrar position, and KS confirmed that SP has been recruited as deputy Registrar via an internal recruitment process. KS will notify the PSA that GS is now Registrar (rather than Temporary Registrar).

The table of actions were updated (see table at end of document).

KS gave an update on the Self-Assessment against July 2021 Accredited Register Standards (Action from 30/0922 minutes). The self-assessment is done, but there needs to be an appeal process created for people who apply but are not allowed to join the register. KS stated that we have that in part, through the complaints process, which means that if someone has been rejected due to a safeguarding issue, they can appeal. There is very little that can be done if someone has not completed the required training hours, placement etc. as these are clear standards, however, there needs to be a process for someone who has been through the equivalence process and been rejected, or if someone is rejected on the basis of their Christian identity. KS stated that another process that needs to be written is for those who qualified some years ago and have lost their certificate yet have been practicing and/or employed as a counsellor. Also, for those who apply and have had a gap in their practice. At the moment, we meet with people in this situation and do a short 'viva'. This policy needs to be documented, as well as a way of appealing a decision.

SMR updated on the advertising / proactive recruitment for new members of RAP. The new terms of reference and new recruitment processes give a platform from which we can now go ahead and look at recruiting, as it has not been possible to do this before.

Actions	Name	Date
Register Appeal Policy	KS/GS	31 March 2024
Return to Practice Policy	KS/GS	31 March 2024
Equivalence Decision Review	KS/GS	31 March 2024

5. Complaints (+ issues arising from) – was agenda item 9

SMR gave a complaints update. There were four outstanding complaints when we last met.

6. PSA standards

PSA Annual Check – Targeted Review

KS stated that the PSA became aware of the ICO complaint (made as part of a complaint process) during the annual check and decided that they would need to do another targeted review. KS wrote to the PSA explaining that a targeted review as had been experienced in 2022 would be counterproductive, and was reassured that the focus would be on ICO issues. SMR has taken

responsibility for reporting on this, and GS has taken responsibility for ensuring all staff, board, trustees etc. have completed online GDPR training. The PSA are meeting early October to give us a decision mid/late October as to whether we have any conditions before we can renew.

KS believes any recommendations will be around GDPR policies and processes or the delays in getting this process agreed.

EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) standard

KS said that where we won't be able to meet the standard as we don't have access to client information or information about who visits the website. However, with the new system we will over time be able to collect EDI data about registrants.

Standard 1B assessment

This standard relates to whether ACC benefits members of the public, and do the benefits outweigh the risks. KS said there is a body of research that shows the benefit of counselling, and there are some studies that show a religious aspect/intervention can be helpful.

We are waiting for the PSA to let us know whether we have met the standard.

7. ACC Update

KS stated that there will be a full PSA review next year, so we do really need to make sure that we are meeting all of the standards. We would need to evidence how we meet each of the individual standards and the PSA will want to check that the evidence is of sufficient quality to meet them.

CC queried how large a piece of work this will be, and KS thinks it will be a medium piece of work, as we have most things in place, but they may need renewing and refreshing. CC queried whether members of the Board might be able to support this and SMR agreed that the load could be shared, although it would mean asking people who understand the processes and policies.

KS gave an update on the new IT system, and we have been given a more realistic deadline of Monday 13 November for it to 'go live'. Data migration is due to take place on 15 October. Testing has been difficult – the system is now more stable, but there aren't many people able to do testing. It's not quite ready to let those outside the team help. KS said that we are happy to be pragmatic and go live with non-critical errors and find workarounds because the longer we delay going live, the harder it will be to realise the benefits of the new system both in terms of promoting ACC and expanding membership, and also in terms of providing current members a more attractive and accessible website.

SMR added an item not on the agenda, which is exploring a coaching/mentoring stream. The risk is that this is another piece of work for a small organisation. CC asked if we have approached the PSA about it? SMR says we haven't yet, but we will be. We need to be able to delineate between membership streams. FS asked about requirements for membership – SMR says we need to look at criteria. We may need to grandfather current members on to the membership. CC says there should be some sort of minimum requirement.

8. Review of RAP policies

NEW Declaration of Interests Form

CC spotted some typos. Mentions it will be reviewed on an annual basis. KS says it's set up when someone joins board/RAP – a signed document - then recommits every year (unless anything changes in the meantime). Then a spreadsheet compiling all the declarations. Spreadsheet – version control – so we can see when changes are made. GS shared spreadsheet to show how changes are recorded. There is a 'mirror' spreadsheet for the board, which they update after every meeting.

CC requested we send the link for the main RAP folder as well as the folder for that particular meeting (so people can easily access documents such as the declaration of interests spreadsheet).

KS suggests everyone complete a form before the next meeting. HC requested that RAP members be emailed a copy of the form, once it has been agreed.

RAP talked through the declarations of interest form in detail to clarify wording and definitions. KS made some updates to the form during the meeting as a result. KS asked RAP to send any further suggestions in an email, and that it will put it to the Board in October. If all is OK, the form will be used.

Guidance for Redacting Board and RAP minutes

These were reviewed with some minor amendments.

Terms of Reference

These were reviewed with some minor amendments.

Recruitment Process

These were reviewed with some minor amendments.

Membership

CC – Section 2 – add another requirement for a 'person of good standing' (2.4) – re unspent convictions etc. SMR – 2.1 – people from complaints panels and assessors (contracted staff) should not be a RAP member. Updates were made to the document during the meeting.

CC suggests that KS review all documents to make sure any changes made today haven't created any inconsistencies across the documents.

Actions	Name	Date
Update and submit documents to October Board meeting	KS	Oct
Declaration of interest forms to be sent to RAP members	KS	Dec

9. ACC Counselling Update (to include regulation & wider Profession)

Complaints Process, September version

KS has updated the processes in light of the comments previously made. KS explained the he notifications policy that wasn't ready at the last meeting – it says that, if you've applied to ACC and you've ticked the box to say you've got an unspent conviction or you've been dismissed from unemployment, or if you tell us that you are subject to complaint through another professional body or anything that puts you at risk, there's a process by which that notification is assessed by somebody who's called an Independent Reviewer.

AOB

None.

Dates of next meetings

8 December 2023, 1pm for lunch then 2-5pm (in person)

22 March 2024, 2pm (Zoom)

28 June 2024, 2pm (Zoom)

27 September 2024, 2pm (Zoom) – TBC

13 December 2024, 1pm lunch, 2pm meeting (in person) - TBC

Table of Actions C/F added or noted as completed at the meeting.

Open – Actions

Cross Ref to Minutes	Action	Who	By When	Outcome
19/05/23 Item 6	Review of Section E of the Practice Review document	GS	By December meeting	

Actions on ACC's Workplan / Ongoing Items

Cross Ref to Minutes	Action	Who	By When	Outcome
30/09/22	Self-Assessment against July 2021 Accredited Register Standards	KS/GS	30 th March 2023	Ongoing
02/12/22 Item 12	Begin to look at advertising/pro-actively recruit for new members to RAP	SMR/KS	September 2023	Ongoing
10/02/23 Item 8	Create a policy for register applicants applying to join after a gap in practice	GS/KS	May 2023	Ongoing

Completed/No Longer Required Actions

Cross Ref to Minutes	Action	Who	By When	Outcome
02/12/22 Item 4	Correct September minutes to reflect date of next meeting as 2 nd December 2022	GS	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 4	Change format of minutes to include actions and decisions within body of minutes and use a summary notes approach rather than minuting.	GS	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 4	Organise SharePoint access for TW	GS	ASAP	COMPLETE

02/12/22 Item 4	Follow-up to notes Forum	KS/GS	January 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 5	ACC to consider making alterations to the decision impacts document, which have been recommended by RAP in notes above.	KS/SMR	Ongoing	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 5	SMR to submit to RAP documents outlining ACC reasoning and decisions around complaint currently in appeals process	SMR	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 5	SMR to provide RAP with Steve Johnston's report on proposed new complaints process	SMR	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 5	RAP to respond to PSA EDI consultation	RAP	December 2022	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 5	RAP to contribute to ACC's response to safeguarding consultation	RAP	January 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 10	Check if PSA had been informed about original accreditation pilot.	SMR	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 14	KS and CC to organise onboarding process for TW	KS/CC	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 4	Consider how best to redact minutes for ACC website.	KS/GS/SMR	TBC	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 4	Circulate membership statistics produced for board meeting	GS	ASAP	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 4	Update November meeting minutes	GS	February 2023	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 4	Redact November meeting minutes and publish as summary notes of discussion on ACC website	SMR and office team	TBC	COMPLETE
02/12/22 Item 5	PSA standards to be included as standard item on RAP agenda going forward	KS	Ongoing	COMPLETE

02/12/22 Item 5	A copy of the PSA standard should be included with each RAP agenda	KS	Ongoing	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 4	Email RAP committee to ask for titles	SP	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 4	Corrections to the December minutes, including spelling of RN's surname	SP	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 4	Send RAP committee link to higher level SharePoint folder	KS	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 4	Update table of actions with those that are now closed	SP	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 4	Add a link re PSA standards to the March agenda	KS	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 4	Produce some principles for redaction for RAP committee and ACC Board meeting minutes	SMR	TBC	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 6	Implement checks of a proportion of registered members' websites and social media	GS	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 8	Check criteria for joining the ACC register on the website	KS	March 2023	COMPLETE
10/02/23 Item 8	Provide details at RAP meetings of register applicants who have not been approved and the reason	GS	March 2023	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 6d	Update Table of Actions to include a, b, c etc.	SP	May 2023	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 10	Website updates	GS/YH	ASAP	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 4a	RAP members to check biographies on the ACC website	All RAP members	ASAP	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 4b	RAP to be kept updated via appropriate channels	KS/SMR	ONGOING	COMPLETE

24/03/23 Item 5	Ask Peter Roberts to update our confirmation status on Companies House website	KS	ASAP	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 6a	Update page 5 of February 2023 minutes	SP	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 6b	Clarify whether the final paragraph of Item 7 (page 6 of February 2023 minutes) is correct	KS	MAY 2023	COMPLETE
24/03/23 Item 6c	Update report of membership numbers to swap axes	GS	MAY 2023	COMPLETE
19/05/23 Item 2a	Research guidance on scope of interests from e.g. charity commission	TW	Prior to next meeting	COMPLETE
19/05/23 Item 2b	Find out PSA recommendations on scope of conflict of interests	SMR	Prior to next meeting	COMPLETE
19/05/23 Item 2c	Make changes to conflict of interest register and set it up for ease of printing	KS	Prior to next meeting	COMPLETE
19/05/23 Item 3	Update March 2023 minutes, as above	SP	Prior to next meeting	COMPLETE
19/05/23 Item 5	Review of standing documents	All	Prior to next meeting	COMPLETE
19/05/23 Item 7	Amend the register number report to include reason for rejection of register application.	GS	Prior to next meeting	COMPLETE

Completed actions will be archived after 12 months.