

ACC RAP MEETING – Summary Notes

Date of Meeting: Friday 24th March 2023

Attendance – Online (Zoom)

Catherine Clarke BA BAI MSc; Solicitor (England & Wales) (CC) – Chair RAP
 Revd Dr Richard Needle (RN) Independent
 Doreen Rowland OBE (DR) Independent
 Fiona Stevenson (FS) Independent
 Dr Heather Churchill (HC) 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

Apologies

None

1. Welcome and Apologies

CC opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. The meeting was opened in prayer

As SMR needed to leave the meeting early, it was decided to change the order of the agenda, to include items that required input from SMR first.

3. Conflicts of Interest

HC, KS and GS have access to confidential BACP Accreditation process material due to their roles in the SCoPEd project – they are unable to share this information with RAP, but are aware that their knowledge of this may influence their input.

4. Complaints + issues arising from

SMR gave an update on progress with a complaint, and concerns about the impact of what could be described as vexatious behaviour on the part of the registrant on the team at ACC. Events emphasised the importance of having up to date information on the website about RAP members.

Actions	Name	Date
RAP members to check biographies on the ACC website	All RAP members	ASAP
RAP to be kept updated via appropriate channels	KS/SMR	ongoing

5. ACC Update

PSA Targeted Review

KS confirmed that ACC have met all the conditions. The next task is to produce the complaints process which hasn't yet been started. The new process will be developed to include all the learning from recent complaints and from other counselling organisations. KS explained that there is some risk related to this, as there is so much work on so few shoulders.

Progress on ACC's self-assessment against evidence framework (practice review, terms and conditions of membership)

One current gap is to have a more formal appeals process for applicants whose membership application for registered membership is denied. ACC has not experienced this as the requirements for the register are clear. However, there are cases in relation to decisions on safe practice and equivalence that could give rise to appeals, and we need to have a proportionate process to assess appeals.

CC asked about the need to update ACC's articles of association. SMR confirmed that ACC is operating within the articles, they just need updating. For example, the constitution of the Board needs to be clarified. SMR stated that a solicitor has been involved to ensure that the articles are future-proof – we need them to be in line with what ACC is now, but also work for what we want to be in the future.

TW highlighted that the Companies House website says that the confirmation status for ACC's annual return is overdue, and CC stated that Companies House will be tightening up verification of content on its website in the next few months. KS said she would ask Peter Roberts to update our confirmation status.

Actions	Name	Date
Ask Peter Roberts to update our confirmation status on Companies House website	KS	ASAP

Practice Review 2023

HC shared that to her knowledge some students are favouring another counselling membership body as they believed that is easier with this body, so is concerned that ACC don't make accreditation too difficult for members. RAP discussed the point about some membership bodies being perceived as being easier to join, and it was suggested that this is a wider problem for all members of SCoPEd, and that this situation may resolve over time as members have to bring their processes into line with one another and evidence how they map to each SCoPEd column. FS shared that this is similar within coaching – there are two professional bodies, with one that is much harder to get into. However, they provide benefits for members that demonstrate their qualifications and experience to the public. It was agreed that integrity is more important than making the process easy.

HC suggested Section E of the Practice Review is a bit complex with too much overlap and suggested making simpler with perhaps 500 words in total. GS said that ACC want members to reflect on what is going well as well as what needs development, and that Section E replaces the CPD plan from the old audit process, but that we can look at re-wording things.

CC raised a query regarding the Practice Review and the Equalities Act in relation to the protected characteristics. GS explained that we will be updating the wording slightly as the intention is not to make members list all the protected characteristics and address each one, however we would like members to consider equality and inclusion more broadly rather than just focus on one particular characteristic. Members are being invited to think about how they could make their practice more inclusive. HC said that she may have something in a learning outcome that she could share, that may be helpful. GS shared that this would address one of the gaps highlighted in the PSA self-assessment report.

New System

KS shared that the new system has been delayed but that we are expecting it to be ready in May – we are waiting for Image+ to come back to us with a revised ‘go live’ date. However, it’s looking good and will be a big improvement on the current system. KS stated that we have been having some system outages with the current system, with the website going down at around 5 / 5.30pm. Image+ have fixed this for now, but it demonstrates that the system is on borrowed time.

6. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

February 2023 minutes:

These were approved with a few minor amendments.

The Table of Actions was updated with outcomes (see below).

Actions	Name	Date
Update page 5 of February 2023 minutes	SP	COMPLETE
Clarify whether the final paragraph of Item 7 (page 6 of February 2023 minutes) is correct	KS	May 2023

February 2023 matters arising:

GS has started a rolling report of membership numbers.

In the Table of Actions, it was suggested that we add a, b, c etc. after agenda items that have more than one action. It was also suggested that a table for ongoing items be included within the work plan.

Actions	Name	Date
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Update report of membership numbers to swap axes	GS	May 2023
Update Table of Actions to include a, b, c etc.	SP	May 2023

7. Update on PSA and PSA Standards

KS stated that the next review in June will be a 'light' review and will include the new complaints process. The review will be issued 6 weeks before. Changes to the Accreditation process will also go to the PSA for the notification of change process.

CC said that the annual report is on her 'to do' list. KS queried whether this should be published on the website as it is a good annual summary of the work being done. It was agreed that annual reports would be published.

After the principles for redacting minutes have been agreed, we will redact RAP minutes and upload them to the website as part of demonstrating good governance (standard 6).

8. ACC Counselling Update (to include regulation & wider profession) New Accreditation Process

KS shared that the Accreditation and Transfer Accreditation process has been agreed by SCoPEd and ACC's Board. HC commented on the section regarding the evaluation of the Churchill Framework and asking applicants to critically evaluate it. HC invited reconsidering the wording to 'soften' it a little, to perhaps ask people to evaluate how they are utilising it. It was clarified that the purpose of this section is to get people to read and engage with the framework.

HC raised a concern about the terminology of GLH (Guided Learning Hours) and suggested 'tutor contact hours' or 'face-to-face' hours instead. Also discussed was the inclusion of synchronous online tutor contact time. KS suggested including a footnote that explained what is meant by GLH or using 'total teaching hours' (used by SCoPEd).

TW mentioned that he had some minor updates/corrections, which he would email to GS.

9. Risks to ACC & Register

Risks highlighted by KS included risk with the new system (including any mistakes etc.) and the risk involved with complaints. Also, policies / governance that need to be updated.

10. Process Issues Changes

GS highlighted that the way Accreditation/Transfer applications and Practice Reviews are being checked (before passing on to an Assessor) is changing. The more thorough checking of applications/reviews coming into the office should make it easier for the Assessors, particularly as we have access to information on the database that Assessors don't. Therefore, we can ensure all the relevant information is provided before the application/review is passed on.

GS shared that the postcode has been removed from the Accredited Register check on the website. The Find a Counsellor page is the only place where counsellors can be searched for by postcode. This is in line with other counselling registers and mitigates issues around security, privacy etc.

11. AOB

There was a discussion about complaint raised against ACC. KS explained the policy around complaints against ACC and confirmed that this would be led by a member of the board, in keeping with the published complaints policy.

Dates of next meeting:

19 May 2023, 2-5pm (Zoom)

22 September, 2-5pm (Zoom)

8 December, 2-5pm (in person)

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

Open – Actions

Cross Ref to Minutes	Action	Who	By When	Outcome
24/03/23 Item 4a	RAP members to check biographies on the ACC website	All RAP members	ASAP	
24/03/23 Item 4b	RAP to be kept updated about complaints via appropriate channels	KS/SMR	ONGOING	
24/03/23 Item 5	Ask Finance Director to update our confirmation status on Companies House website	KS	ASAP	
24/03/23 Item 6a	Update page 5 of February 2023 minutes	SP	COMPLETE	

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 4	Email members of the ACC Board to ask for titles	SMR	March 2023	Ongoing
10/02/23 Item 4	Produce some principles for redaction for RAP committee and ACC Board meeting minutes	SMR	TBC	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
10/02/23 Item 8	Check criteria for joining the ACC register on the website	KS	March 2023	Ongoing

Completed/No Longer Required Actions

Cross Ref to Minutes	Action	Who	By When	Outcome
17/06/22	SMR to send RAP the report / link from the last NHS service	SMR	By September meeting	COMPLETED
17/06/22	SMR to inform RAP of any request arising from current complaint for a member of RAP to attend the appeal panel	SMR	ASAP or as soon as they are known.	No longer required due to complaints policy change.
17/06/22 Item 4	DS to produce rolling report of membership numbers	GS	February 2023	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 4	Correct September minutes to reflect date of next meeting as 2 nd December 2022	GS	February 2023	COMPLETED

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	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 4	Organise SharePoint access for TW	GS	ASAP	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 4	Follow-up to notes Forum	KS/GS	January 2023	COMPLETED
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	COMPLETED
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	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 5	SMR to provide RAP with Steve Johnston's report on proposed new complaints process	SMR	February 2023	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 5	RAP to respond to PSA EDI consultation	RAP	December 2022	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 5	RAP to contribute to ACC's response to safeguarding consultation	RAP	January 2023	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 10	Check if PSA had been informed about original accreditation pilot.	SMR	February 2023	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 14	KS and CC to organise onboarding process for TW	KS/CC	February 2023	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 4	Consider how best to redact minutes for ACC website.	KS/GS/SMR	TBC	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 4	Circulate membership statistics produced for board meeting	GS	ASAP	COMPLETED

02/12/22 Item 4	Update November meeting minutes	GS	February 2023	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 4	Redact November meeting minutes and publish as summary notes of discussion on ACC website	SMR and office team	TBC	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 5	PSA standards to be included as standard item on RAP agenda going forward	KS	Ongoing	COMPLETED
02/12/22 Item 5	A copy of the PSA standard should be included with each RAP agenda	KS	Ongoing	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 4	Email RAP committee to ask for titles	SP	March 2023	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 4	Corrections to the December minutes, including spelling of RN's surname	SP	March 2023	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 4	Send RAP committee link to higher level SharePoint folder	KS	March 2023	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 4	Update table of actions with those that are now closed	SP	March 2023	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 4	Add a link re PSA standards to the March agenda	KS	March 2023	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 6	Implement checks of a proportion of registered members' websites and social media	GS	March 2023	COMPLETED
10/02/23 Item 8	Provide details at RAP meetings of register applicants who have not been approved and the reason	GS	March 2023	COMPLETED

Completed actions will be archived after 12 months.