

## The Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC) Register Advisory Panel Governance Document No 1

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. Purpose of the Register Advisory Panel

- 1.1 The Register Advisory Panel (hereafter referred to as the Panel) was established by ACC in 2014 to assist in meeting the obligations and commitments set out by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) in the Standards for Accredited Registers, published on the PSA's website [available here](#)
- 1.2 ACC determined that the way it could be supported in complying with the Standards was to set up an **independent panel** of individuals with expertise in professional regulation, healthcare, legal matters, patient and consumer advocacy or with similar relevant knowledge and experience to oversee the governance, design, and management of the accredited register of counsellors held by the ACC under the Accredited Registers Programme.
- 1.3 The Panel exists to support ACC through review and constructive critique of the governance, design and management of ACC's accredited register, with reference to the Standards, and to make comments and/or recommendations to ACC's Board of Trustees on any proposed changes to the same.
- 1.4 In the unlikely event that the Panel is unable to support the Board's decisions or otherwise is concerned that the standards and integrity of ACC's accredited register are being placed at significant risk, they have the right and responsibility to notify the PSA of their concerns. Contact details for the PSA are found [here](#)

#### 2. Terms of reference:

- 2.1 The Panel reports to the Board of ACC
- 2.2 Recruitment to the Panel will be as set out in the Panel's Recruitment and Induction Policy [insert link when published]
- 2.3 The Chair of the Panel will be appointed by ACC and will be one of the independent members with suitable skills.
- 2.4 The Chair of the Panel is responsible for:
  - a) scheduling meetings
  - b) setting meeting agendas

- c) requesting reports related to the Standards, for example, a summary of complaints and practice reviews, to be presented at meetings
  - d) by exception requesting attendance if required from trustees or executives of ACC when their presence is required to make well informed comments and recommendations
  - e) preparing an independent annual report on the work of the Panel for the Professional Standards Authority as part of the annual check and/or full accreditation renewal assessment [See here](#)
  - f) being available as requested to liaise with the Chair of ACC on matters arising relevant to the Panel's purpose and independence (see also point 2.6 below)
  - g) ensuring that conflicts of interest are managed in accordance with the conflicts of interest policy
- 2.5 The panel will normally meet not less than three times in each calendar year
- 2.6 At the Panel Chair's discretion, a video-conferencing call or email communication can be arranged between scheduled meetings, to discuss any issues that arise and require timely input from the Panel.
- 2.7 A quorum for decision making will be three voting members. The Chair of RAP will have a casting vote in the event of a hung decision. Where a meeting is not quorate, any decisions made will need to be ratified at the next quorate meeting.
- 2.8 The voting members' appointment to the Panel will be for a period of three years. The voting members may be re-appointed after this time, usually for a maximum of further two periods of three years, at which time they stand down unless requested to stay on for a further period by the Trustees of ACC.
- 2.9 Travelling expenses are covered at ACC's standard rate for any in-person meetings.
- 2.10 Members will normally be required to attend all meetings.
- 2.11 ACC's Registrar will normally be responsible for ensuring that accurate minutes of meetings are produced and circulated, and for tracking actions.
- 2.12 The Chair of ACC will normally be responsible for ensuring that minutes are published on ACC's websites, subject to the Guidance on Redacting Minutes Policy.

- 2.13 The Panel will review these Terms of Reference on a three yearly basis planned normally to align with the PSA's full accreditation renewal cycle.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 The Standards in their entirety provide a general framework defining the scope of RAP's advisory oversight, with the following standards setting out areas where the RAP will normally have specific focus:

- a) Standard two: **management of the register**
- b) Standard three: **standards for registrants**
- c) Standard four: **education and training**
- d) Standard five: **complaints and concerns about registrants**
- e) Standard seven: **management of risks arising from the activity of the registrants**
- f) Standard nine: **equality, diversity, and inclusion**

- 3.2 ACC's Board of Trustees may also request that the Panel advise on the remaining Standards in recognition of the fact that ACC's accredited register of counsellors does not exist in a vacuum but within a wider professional counselling function managed by ACC.

- a) Standard one: eligibility and public interest
- b) Standard six: governance
- c) Standard eight: communications and engagement

### **4. Specific Tasks of the Register Advisory Panel**

- 4.1 Review and approve proposed changes to the counselling ethics and practice standards and related policies <sup>1</sup> of ACC's Accredited Register of Counsellors to ensure that they comply with the PSA Standards.
- 4.2 Ensure ongoing quality and integrity of registration, accreditation, practice reviews and complaints processes (including the register application and renewal processes).
- 4.3 On a regular basis to consider practice review outcomes and complaint summaries to identify risks and issues which can drive standards, policies, and process improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> Counselling ethics and practice standards include but are not limited to ethics, CPD, supervision, insurance, record keeping, practice breaks, duty of candour.

- 4.4 To be involved as an independent body where required in ACC's complaint procedures to contribute to or review decisions and outcomes on individual cases.
- 4.6 On an annual basis to identify, review and evaluate risks as they apply to the Register.
- 4.7 On an annual basis to submit a report for ACC's Board and for the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) on the work of the RAP.
- 4.8 To ensure that ACC inform RAP of any changes to the PSA standards and to include as standing agenda items PSA updates and changes to standards.
- 4.9 To consider the impact on ACC's register of relevant changes to the PSA regulatory system and advise accordingly.
- 4.10 To support public engagement activities relating to ACC's register and the Professional Standards Authority work with accredited registers.
- 4.11 To consider any significant changes that are proposed or made to ACC in terms of governance, organisation, or activities that could have an impact on the maintenance of register standards.

## **5. Members as at March 2024**

### Voting Members

Chair - Catherine Clarke, Independent, Solicitor (England and Wales)

Dr Heather Churchill, Member of ACC, Representative of Counselling Profession\* [accredited counsellor, head of counselling faculty at Waverley Abbey College]

Doreen Rowland, OBE Independent [retired occupational therapist]

Fiona Stevenson, Independent, Facilitator and Executive coach

Tim Warren, Independent [retired solicitor]

### Non-Voting Members (ACC)

Head of Membership Services and Registrar: Gillian Stuart

Chair: Sue Moncton-Rickett

CEO: Kathy Spooner

[\* The inclusion of a professional member was agreed with the Accreditation Team of the Professional Standards Authority in 2017 when the new Register Advisory Panel was being recruited.]

## **6. Former Members**

Fiona Sherburn, NHS Mental Health Trust Manager until June 2017  
Rev. Tony Ruddle, Counsellor and Baptist Minister, till December 2019  
Rev. Dr. Richard Needle, Independent [retired clinical pharmacist], till end of 2023

## **7. Document Control**

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