



Minutes of Register Advisory Panel

Date Friday 16th May 2025

Meeting Time 2pm – 5pm

Via Zoom

Note on meeting dates:

March RAP meeting re-scheduled to May, and Panel agreed when re-arranging the dates that the proposed July meeting will be cancelled as insufficient time to meaningfully report progress between May and July.

Commonly used abbreviations and relevance to RAP oversight.

PSA	Professional Standards Authority , oversee accredited registers and publish standards that ACC need to uphold
PCPB	Partnership of Counselling and Psychotherapy Practice
SCoPEd	Scope of Practice and Education . Competence framework that now sits under the PCPB

Attendance

Name		RAP Panel member/ ACC	Present May 25
Catherine Clarke	CC	RAP Chair	Y
Dr Alison Evans	AE	RAP Panel Member	Y
Dr Heather Churchill	HC	RAP Panel Member	N
Dr Charlotte Johnson	CJ	RAP Panel Member	N
Doreen Rowland OBE	DR	RAP Panel Member	Y
Fiona Stevenson	FS	RAP Panel Member	Y
Tim Warren	TW	RAP Panel Member	Y
Sarah James	SJ	Prospective Panel Member	Y
Melinda Mozes	MM	Prospective Panel Member	Y
Sue Monckton-Rickett	SMR	ACC Chair	Y
Sarah Palmer	SP	ACC Deputy Registrar	N
Kathy Spooner	KS	CEO	Y
Christine Pinder	CP	Board Observer (rotating role)	Y

1. Welcome and Introductions

Catherine Clark, opened the meeting, extending a special welcome to

- Melinda Moses (prospective member)
- Sarah James (prospective member)
- Christine Pinder (Board member, attending as observer)

Apologies received from HC, CJ

Attendees introduced themselves, outlining their professional background and RAP membership history.

2. Opening Prayer

In keeping with RAP practice, the meeting opened in prayer.

3. Conflict of interests

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the December 2024 meeting were agreed with minor amendments.

Matters Arising

- Update on the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

SMR confirmed that a presentation on final changes will need to be postponed till the next meeting. The Charity Commission has come back and accepted the intended expansion of membership, but has two requested changes. One is a question about trustees and whether they should be members of ACC, which just needs clarification, as membership is appropriate for Trustees, as ACC is a membership body for professionals. The other is a request to rewrite the charitable purposes so that they are more succinct. The Chair confirmed that RAP will be especially interested in risks and mitigation relating to the retention of the Accredited Register and the maintenance of standards in counselling and psychotherapy.

- PSA conditions

KS confirmed that the PSA conditions from the 2024 full review have been met by the due date January 2025.

- SCoPEd implementation/compliance

KS reported that Dr Janet Penny has been appointed on a consultancy basis to assist with the work to ensure ACC have all the accreditation mechanisms in place for the implementation of SCoPEd by January 2026.

- Revised complaints process and related actions/concerns

KS reported that no further progress has been made with the complaints process.

SMR reported that gender identifiers have been removed from the complaints report.

The Chair suggested that the item on re-wording on ACC’s complaint form should be discussed at the next meeting when the panel member who raised the concern will be present.

- RAP recruitment

The Chair reported that RAP recruitment is progressing, with the 2 prospective members MM, SJ attending this meeting.

5 Professional Standards Authority (PSA) & Standards Update.

KS reported that the PSA are conducting a review on the Standards for the regulators and accredited registers that they oversee. One question posed is whether standards for Accredited Registers (voluntary) and Statutory Regulators should be more closely aligned. Also, there is a proposal to have a new standard about the ‘culture’ of the organisation/governance bodies arising from concerns about behaviour at the Nursing and Midwifery Council. ACC have concerns about the burden of imposing standards/measures intended for statutory bodies on voluntary registers, many of which are run and managed by volunteers. ACC were also concerned that measuring culture challenging could become a tick box exercise.

The panel discussed how the lack of statutory recognition for counsellors creates difficulties for membership bodies, for example, in giving clear and reliable guidance to members, as often government and legal directions apply only to roles that are subject to statutory regulation. Counsellors are not legally recognised (in the Data Protection Act) as “healthcare professionals”, only “child counsellor” is explicitly referenced in law, so data protection provisions that apply to healthcare professionals do not strictly apply.

	Actions	Name	Date
5	Report back on the outcome of consultation when published and impact on governance/RAP	KS	TBA

6 Membership Criteria and Terms of Reference Review

Prospective members SJ and MM were temporarily moved to a breakout room for this item.

SMR presented her paper *Review of RAP Membership*. In summary: recent and

forthcoming membership changes and issues of recruitment to RAP prompted reassessment of the balance between counsellor, lay, and independent members on the panel.

ACC’s Board recommendation is that:

- a) Lay members are those not practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist.
- b) Independent members are not a trustee, employee, or member of ACC.
- c) The majority of voting members should be either lay or independent.
- d) Two counsellor members are permitted to be on RAP; and during a transitional period, when one panel member joins before another leaves, on a temporary basis, three counsellor members can be allowed.
- e) If the majority of a meeting were not lay/independent, this must be reported to ACC’s Board.
- f) Chair role not restricted by profession; skills/experience are the priority.

Panel discussion included:

Concerns about conflicts of interest for ACC counsellor members. SMR explained parallels with Board practice: general benefits are acceptable; specific financial benefits must be declared and managed.

Importance of being transparent and managing issues on a case-by-case in relation to conflicts of interest, including holding extraordinary meetings if needed.

It was noted that the current RAP already exceeds PSA’s independence requirements; and that RAP is advisory, not a decision-making body.

Recognition that the ideal make-up of the panel need to be balanced with the challenges of recruiting

Conclusion

RAP approved the proposed changes to ToR and membership selection criteria, which allow an additional counsellor to be on the panel.

	Actions	Name	Date
6	To amend TOR and Membership Criteria docs to reflect discussion and present back to Board	KS	End of Year

MM SJ were invited back following the conclusion of this item.

7 Recruitment Update

KS gave an update on the successful recruitment process for two new roles.

- Head of Membership Services: candidate appointed has a background in advertising/digital project management and Citizens Advice Bureau

management. Expected start mid-June.

- Head of Professional Standards/Registrar: candidate appointed has a background in academic publishing and recent counselling training. Will work 15 hours/week with adjusted responsibilities. Expected start May.

Discussion: panel queried whether the availability of the Registrar would be sufficient for the role, given the appointee's restriction on hours available; KS explained that there was some flexibility as to how these hours could be used over each monthly period.

Outcome: RAP welcomed both appointments, noting improved resilience and reduced reliance on senior leadership.

8. Coaching and Mentoring membership update

KS reported the following progress

- External consultants (Sue Iqbal and Alison Cansdale) engaged to design membership structure in consultation with other Christians in coaching and mentoring.
- Proposed membership structure:
 1. **Associate Membership** – akin to pastoral care, for those employed as coaches/mentors in churches/schools (not requiring directory listing but nonetheless signing up to a code of ethics).
 2. **ACC Verified Membership** – akin to registered counsellor equivalent, prospective members submit an application outlining training and experience and their suitability for membership is assessed by external coaches/mentors. ACC will be guided by their recommendations and will then add the member to the database and the verified member can advertise on 'find a coach/mentor'.
 3. **Accredited Membership** – for those holding accreditation with recognised coaching bodies; direct application on ACC's system, and member can advertise on Find a Counsellor as an accredited coach/mentor. Needs to be clear that they are not verified by ACC but other bodies..
- Codes of ethics and resource development underway; launch events and community of practice meetings planned.

Discussion:

Panel emphasised the importance of separation between register governance and new membership streams.

KS confirmed this was addressed in the revised Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the core focus of ACC remains the counselling register, with diversification supporting sustainability for the organisation.

Benefits noted: one-stop shop for Christian practitioners; client preference for coaching acknowledged.

KS/SMR highlighted the following points which help to demonstrate the intention to reassure members that expansion will not detract from current primacy of counselling. The counselling profession remains the 'soil' of ACC, with branches extending into other areas such as pastoral care and coaching.

- ACC is holding an online Counselling Conference later this year.
- The recruitment of a Head of Professional Standards and Registrar reflects a commitment to supporting professional standards and counsellors' wellbeing.
- ACC will continue engagement in the Partnership of Counselling and Psychotherapy Bodies (PCPB).
- Financial risk associated with new initiatives is being mitigated through grant funding and careful financial monitoring,

Also

- Additional resources and forums are planned for Pastoral Care members, ensuring parity with new Coaching and Mentoring initiatives.

A panel member highlighted that supervision is a gap in Christian coaching, suggesting ACC could develop provision. KS noted that dual directory listings (as a coach/mentor and coaching/mentoring supervisor) could help connect supervisors and coaches.

Panel recommendation: ACC Board to continue risk assessment to ensure separation between register and new membership streams.

11. PSA Annual Review – ACC Responses

KS presented the draft PSA submission. Key events included:

- Articles of Association updated and resubmitted to the charities commission.
- Creation of a Senior accredited membership grade aligned with SCoPEd framework (Column C).
- Membership terms updated as requested by the PSA to restrict the PSA Quality Mark usage outside the UK.
- EDI data collection and reporting is underway
- Practice review / audit target reduced from 5% to 3% (following Board-approval).
- Qualifying training standard adjusted to 70% in-person / 30% synchronous online in line with the PCPB standard.
- Register numbers showing steady growth.

- ACC had three complaints in 2024, none of which progressed to full investigation.
- Governance strengthened with role separation (Registrar and Membership Services).
- Risk monitoring of members includes early intervention on misleading advertising.
- Disability/neurodivergent community of practice launched.

RAP members endorsed the submission and commended its clarity.

12. Chair's Annual Report

Chair of RAP presented her annual report, which included:

- Emphasis on developments in EDI, SCoPEd, and complaints monitoring.
- A note on risks of the voluntary register system, highlighting that unqualified individuals may still practise outside regulatory oversight.

Panel members expressed appreciation for the report's thoroughness and clarity.

13. Counselling Update

Churchill Framework revisions were noted, including stronger recognition of spiritual abuse and clearer guidance on dual roles and relationships.

The complaints process review remains on hold and will be progressed by Dr. Janet Penny (JP) in a consultancy role.

Plans for JP also include restructuring ethics guidance into separate strands: organisational ethics, counselling ethics, and coaching/mentoring ethics.

ACC will respond to the government consultation on victim information requests for counselling notes, which includes taking a broad definition of 'counselling services.'

PCPB collaboration continues to provide wider sector influence.

14. Complaints Report

SMR presented the complaints report.

- No complaints in 2024 met the threshold for full investigation.
- One case referred to BACP (awaiting outcome).
- One organisational/employee case: follow-up will focus on lessons learned.
- One safeguarding case confirmed the counsellor acted appropriately.
- Another closed with reflective learning recommendations.

Panel welcomed the calmer landscape in relation to complaint management compared to the previous 12–18 months.

15. Practice Reviews

KS reported the following in terms of progress

- Revised target going forward of 3% of members set for practice reviews (reduced from 5%).
- Reviews are staggered across the year (January, May, September)
- Flexibility exists for members retiring or pausing practice.
- Equivalence route applicants who have trained overseas will be scheduled for practice review within 2 years of joining to confirm safe practice.

Chair of RAP stressed the importance of maintaining at least 3% compliance to reassure PSA.

16. Risks

No exceptional risks identified beyond the issue with staffing and recruitment and maintaining normal operations during this stretched time.

Full review of the risk register will be undertaken at the September meeting.

17. Professional Issues and Standards

- ACC has endorsed NHS [‘Staying Safe from Suicide’](#) guidance, noting the importance of maintaining professional discretion and needs-based assessment. Tension remains between the need for those running counselling practices to undertake risk assessments in order to manage a waiting list, and the insistence that these measures should not be used for suicide risk.
- Accreditation process updated with clearer marking guidance, assessor training, and applicant support.
- Equivalence mapping to SCoPEd framework is in development for overseas and non-standard training applicants.
- PCPB discussions underway on mandatory CPD; ACC supportive, especially for faith-integration and safeguarding themes.

18. EDI Data & Strategy

SMR reported that EDI data now collected systematically: age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic background. This is a positive sign in that members are willing to declare minority identities and disabilities. Gaining an agreement on how to measure socioeconomic categories continues to challenge the partnership. ACC have a formulation which we believe works well as it is self-reported.

EDI strategy under development, with focus on practical collaboration and PCPB benchmarking.

Chair queried how much demographic data can or should be collected from counselling clients; noted limitations due to confidentiality and data protection.

19. RAP Membership and Succession Planning

Chair (CC), DR and HC to step down in staggered sequence to ensure continuity. AE indicated willingness to consider role of Chair, subject to ACC team support and agreement of panel members. Panel discussed the value of creating a Deputy Chair role.

MM and SJ were welcomed as prospective members and confirmed that, due to Terms and Reference revisions, ACC membership is not a barrier to RAP involvement

20. Public Engagement

- ACC presence at London School of Theology Spiritual Abuse Conference: engagement and resource sharing.
- Positive CPD collaboration developed with Prof. Lisa Oakley on spiritual abuse.
- Sue conducted interview with Trans World Radio on public wellbeing and media consumption.
- Discussions underway with Loss and Hope regarding potential involvement in bereavement events planned for Cathedrals.

21. Any Other Business and Next Meetings

Plans to adapt the Churchill Frameworks (for coaching/mentoring) noted.

Meeting closed with thanks to members, particularly new attendees Sarah and Melinda.

Dates of next meetings

26th September, via Zoom

12th December 2023, 1pm lunch, 2pm meeting in person