



Minutes of Register Advisory Panel

Date Friday 12th December 2025

Meeting Time 2pm – 5pm

Via Zoom

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 Dec 25
Dr Allison Evans	AE	RAP Chair	Y
Dr Heather Churchill	HC	RAP Panel Member	Y
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	RAP Panel Member (new)	Y
Melinda Mozes	MM	RAP Panel Member (new)	Y
Sue Monckton-Rickett	SMR	ACC Chair	Y
Sarah Palmer	SP	ACC Deputy Registrar	N
Kathy Spooner	KS	ACC CEO	Y
Marie Hooper	MH	ACC Head of Prof Standards/Registrar (new)	Y
Jennie Fytche	JF	Board Observer (rotating role)	Y

1. Welcome and Introductions

AE, opened the meeting, extending a special welcome to JF as the Board observer.

Apologies received from CJ and SP, ACC's Deputy Registrar

2. Opening Prayer

In keeping with RAP practice, the meeting was 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 Sept 2025 meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Confirmed which actions from the Sept 2025 meeting were on today's agenda or had already been completed.

The following actions were identified as to be carried forward:

	Actions carried forward	Name	Date
12/12/25 4.d	Update ACC website with new Terms of Reference	KS	Mar 2026 - done
12/12/25 7.2a	Soft launch Coaching and Mentoring (delayed go live until had over 8 people on register, this will go live 16 December 2025 so only slightly delayed).	KS	Dec 2025 - done

5 Professional Standards Authority (PSA) & Standards Update.

5.1 PSA completed a review of the standards, report published in Oct 2025. KS shared summary the proposals from this report, though the final standards have not yet been approved and published.

5.2 PSA are proposing amendments including:

- New governance and leadership standard (focus on organisational culture)
- Increase the focus on alignment and collaboration between regulators
- Stronger emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Major reforms to complaints processes – emphasis on being “humane”.
- New expectations regarding support for both complainants *and* registrants.

5.3 Implications

- Potential significant workload once revised standards are published (likely March 2026). Will know more in July around time of our PSA annual review, when

we may need to respond to the new standards (depending on the timing of the annual check), though we won't be expected to have implemented the new standards by then.

- ACC complaints process currently being revised (led by Dr Janet Penny) to ensure alignment with anticipated PSA standards.
- Recognition that complaints processes must balance public protection with registrant wellbeing.

5.4 PSA are exploring a single access register for public protection (technology has been funded; development 2–3 years away).

	Actions	Name	Date
5a	Review and align revised ACC complaints process with new PSA standards once published.	KS (JP)	TBC

6 RAP Policies

None

7 ACC Update

7.1 Coaching and Mentoring Membership Project Progress

- Backend live; front-end directory to go live shortly.
- Fewer applicants than anticipated so far.
- Technical snags are being resolved.
- Marketing plans to increase visibility (including graphic design support).
- Feedback that fees not easily visible from the coaching page

7.2 PCPB Counselling and Psychotherapy Commission update

- Two meetings held.
 - Themes: state of sector, statutory regulation, public protection gaps.
- Recognition of structural government barriers.
- Debate regarding statutory regulation – majority supportive, some reservations.
- Single access register seen as step toward greater public safety.
- Highlighted that PSA could do a lot to make this a safer profession even before statutory regulation.
- Increasing urgency around gender-related practice guidance and ethical clarity.
- No immediate actions for RAP, but ongoing engagement noted.

	Actions	Name	Date
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7.3 ACC's 2026 plans

- Priority 1: Finalise and consult on revised complaints process.
- Priority 2: Implement Scope-aligned accreditation pathways (Level 4, Level 5+, Standard Route). And recruit and prepare assessors.
- Priority 3: Develop Senior Accreditation routes.
- Priority 4: Explore accreditation of CPD/postgraduate courses (longer-term).
- Additional Standards Work
 - Define minimum standards for:
 - Working with children and young people.
 - Working with couples.
 - Pastoral supervision (for directory listings).
- Governance & Operational Work
 - PSA reaccreditation preparation.
 - Review equivalence processes.
 - Systems security and data protection improvements.
 - Rewrite ACC Counselling Ethics (currently dated 2004; language outdated).

	Actions	Name	Date
7.3a	Begin rewrite of ACC counselling ethics framework (process-focused, accessible language).	KS	TBC
7.3b	Develop standards for children/young people	KS	TBC
7.3c	Develop standards for couples counselling	KS	TBC
7.3d	Develop standards for pastoral supervision listings.	KS	TBC
7.3e	Prepare contingency planning due to team capacity pressures (asking RAP members if needed)	KS	TBC

8. ACC Counselling Update

8.1 SCoPEd accreditation – new routes update:

- Completed:
 - Guidance notes and JotForm application process finalised for:
 - Standard route
 - Level 4 + top-up
 - Level 5+ top-up
- Viva required only for Level 5+ (option to hold one retained for other routes if required for borderline results).

- One *equivalence* viva successfully completed by MH and Janet Penny (pilot process).
- Next Steps
 - Website publication of new routes pending.
 - Assessor documentation being finalised.
 - Senior accreditation routes to follow (2026).
- Recognition of work MH done in progressing these new accreditation routes.

	Actions	Name	Date
8.1 a	Publish new accreditation pathways on website	MH	Jan 2026
8.1 b	Finalise assessor guidance documentation.	MH	Feb 2026

8.2 Churchill Framework feedback from last 2 years for review

- AI-assisted summary of latest (6 months’) feedback undertaken and shared.
- Previous comprehensive review conducted (HC).
- Generally, very positive feedback; recognising this is a framework, not a code.
- Ongoing discussion regarding clarity of:
 - Spiritual interventions
 - Overlap with spiritual direction
 - Definitions (affirming vs exploratory approaches).

Possible Development

Consider adding examples or clarification regarding “spiritual interventions.”

	Actions	Name	Date
8.2a	Explore if additional clarification/examples should be added to the Churchill Framework (particularly re: spiritual interventions)	KS/HC	TBC
8.2b	Decide if write a supplementary paper on examples of spiritual interventions	HC	Early 2026

9. Complaints

- 3 open complaints:
 - 1 with an organisation which hasn’t gone to an official process
 - 1 is open with a panel due second week of January 2026.
 - 1 waiting for insurance company to come back to us (taking a long time) which is first time this has happened and is holding up the process. Identified as an area to watch and important to ensure our

documentation is rigorous and the reason for delay attributed to the insurer.

- Recognition we're dealing with complaints promptly *on our side*
- Noted that of the 2 people we've removed from our register in the last 2-3 years, we've had others come forward with further evidence to supply for our records, which reinforces the panels decisions.

10. Practice Review, Accreditation & Membership Reports

- Reports were shared with the group with highlight being we have just gone over 1000 professional counselling members!
- Achieved target of 30 Practice Reviews this year (including those who've come via equivalence route who have completed their practice review at BACP or another membership body within the calendar year).

11. Risks to ACC & register

- Two risk registers reviewed by SMR and MH, presented to ACC Board in Nov:
 - a. PSA risk register about risks to the profession
 - b. ACC internal risk register – standard register for what's impacting us, things we need to manage well
- Updated registers shared with RAP members ahead of this meeting with new 2025 risks highlighted.
- MH and SP have been involved in supporting the work with current complaints – helpful to have the extra resource; also proposed new policy will have triage concept, so numbers which may need to go through the formal complaint investigation process may reduce, even if the overall number of complaints increases
- Growth of online counselling service providers and concern about safety and alignment with UK practice – raised via PCPB to the government
- Added risks around AI and online counselling services for our internal risk register and updates added throughout to risk mitigations
- Updates appreciated and welcomed by RAP members. No other questions.

	Actions	Name	Date
11a	Add updates making to checks for those working with CYP as mitigation to ACC risk register (risk 13)	MH	Mar 26

12. Process Issue Changes (Registration, Audit, Accreditation, Complaints etc)

12.1 Complaints process – threshold test and triage:

- Clarification sought regarding whether the threshold test for complaints is objective and documented.
- Confirmation given that:
 - o There are written internal guidelines.
 - o Decisions are not made by a single individual.
- Overview of revised triage approach:
 - o **Low risk:** Feedback provided with the right to reply (mediated by ACC who may meet the complainant and the counsellor).
 - o **Medium risk:** Practice Review Panel; potential remedial actions for registrant.
 - o **High risk** (behavioural violations / fitness to practise): Formal hearings and investigations.
- Concern raised that documentation may imply insufficient communication with complainants at the medium-risk stage.
- Recognition that clarity in the written process is important to avoid misinterpretation and appreciation of the triage approach overall.

12.2 Revised Complaints Framework – Timeline

- The revised complaints process is currently 12 pages of commentary.
- Intention to present a fully revised version at the March 2026 meeting.
- Members to review in advance to allow substantive feedback rather than verbal overview only.

	Actions	Name	Date
12.1a	Ensure threshold test criteria remain clearly documented and consistently applied.	KS	TBC
12.1b	Review complaints documentation to clarify communication with complainants at all triage levels (particularly medium risk).	KS	TBC
12.2a	Provide full revised complaints framework to RAP members in advance of March meeting	KS	Mar 26

13. Standards & Policy Issues and Changes (CPD, Supervision, Insurance, Practice Break etc)

- Work on pastoral supervision definitions is ongoing (aligning with APSE), more to be shared in future on this complex area (however this is not a priority)
- Work also ongoing to look at key competencies in this area which we can measure – looking across denominations
- Important to address the need for our pastoral members for where to find supervision etc and do it within required standards
- We would require people to have a professional membership with us first before becoming a pastoral supervisor member.

	Actions	Name	Date
13a	Complete work on definitions around pastoral supervision and share with RAP for feedback	KS	TBC

14. RAP Standing Items / Concerns

- What's involved with role of Deputy Chair of RAP
 - If Chair sick/has accident and can't chair the meeting or compile the final report who could stand in
 - current complaints process if someone needed to be suspended then there is a consultation with Chair of RAP (never had to use it so far)
- Call for volunteer responded to by HC was accepted with caveat that she's leaving RAP in Sept 2026 so would need another volunteer then.
- Confirmed that HC will stay on the Board until Sept 2026 to help with continuity in transition period for new members after her 9 years of service.

15. Public Engagement

- Hate crime speech response published for members shared by KS

	Actions	Name	Date
15	Share hate crime speech with RAP members by email	MH	Mar 26

16. Any Other Business and Next Meetings

- Panel member is completing her PhD and has requested a sabbatical from RAP while completing that until Sept 2026. This was discussed and approved in the meeting.
- Prayer and formal appreciation were expressed for DR at the transition point. Acknowledgement of Doreen's significant contribution to RAP and ACC.

Dates of next meetings (at least 2 diarised)

- 13 March 2026 – face to face in London – location TBC – lunch will be provided
- 19 June 2026 - Zoom