

**ACC REGISTER ADVISORY PANEL (RAP) MEETING**

**Sutton Surrey**

**Friday 13th December 2019**

**1.00pm – 5.00pm**

**Minutes of Meeting**

# Attendees

**Independent.**

Catherine Clarke, Chair RAP

Doreen Rowland

Richard Needle

Heather Churchill ( by SKYPE)

# ACC

Kathy Spooner, ACC Director of Counselling

Sue Monckton-Rickett, ACC Chair

Dawn Sherry, ACC Registrar

**Apologies**

None

# Notes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting (30/08/19) were accepted as a true record by the chair of the RAP.

Matters Arising from previous minutes;

1 - Page 4 Section 3, 1st line. A typo error - **for accredited counsellors for accredited counsellors,** this was written twice.

3 – Page 6 Section 8 - **There was a question raised by HC as to why ACC did not allow personal counselling to be included as a CPD activity. KS said that she would review this.** This has not been completed action carried forward.

4 – **KS** to investigate and consider providing improved guidance for counsellors as to what can be said on Find A Counsellor – **No further progress, Action Carried Forward**

5 - **KS** to feed back the suggestions about the audit of supervision practice to ACC’s accreditation team and to produce a revised audit form for 2020 (as previously recommended by the lead assessor that no further changes to forms are made in 2019) – ACC‘s accreditation team informed, no further progress on amending the form**. Document was presented at meeting (13/12/19)**

6 – Complaints Process - Completed.

**Meeting Notes**

1. **Setting Standards for Supervision of Members**

KS reported that the audit process had uncovered an issue with supervisors. That is there were two cases this year where supervision was being provided by non-counselling health professionals. Whilst we have earlier this year set out standards as to who can advertise themselves as supervisor on ‘find a supervisor’ – there are currently no guidelines or standards that set out what is required from someone who supervises ACC members. A proposal was made by KS to the November Board and the Board requested that she produce a report setting out in more detail the rationale for setting standards and further details on the standards themselves prior to any consultation. The resulting report (previously circulated to panel members) was discussed at the meeting and generally supported.

HC requested further clarification about the issue of dual roles. This led to a discussion of the type of issues notified to ACC resulting from dual roles and from SMR and KS there was a strong feeling that they should be avoided if at all possible. For example a supervisor who was also a manager may be required to initiate a disciplinary process against a counsellor which could conflict with their role as the counsellor’s supervisor. There was an acceptance that sometimes dual roles are entered into because it helps counselling agencies to manage their costs – however SMR and KS felt that it is preferable to solve the problem of paying for supervision, rather than resorting to a dual role. HC advised that in relation to any published guidelines, the requirement to avoid dual roles should remain as is, which is desirable, and that the words ‘where possible’ be added. Also, to add a form of words which says that where dual roles exist a clear rationale for them must be set-out and mitigating factors put in place for the risks that could arise as a result of the dual relationship. This was agreed by KS/SMR.

1. **Draft Supervision Audit**

As discussed at the May RAP meeting, ACC want to introduce a supervision audit as part of the audit process. This will be for counsellors who supervise other counsellors and/or supervise supervisors.

The audit form, revised following suggestions made at the May meeting, was reviewed and found to be fit for purpose – and overall extending the audit to include the practice of supervision was considered a good thing to do.

KS explained that as part of ACC’s renewal of accreditation with the PSA, we needed to detail what would happen if a counsellor fails to comply with our CPD requirements. The reporting of CPD is in large part now done only at audit. (It used to be at renewal, but the decision was made earlier in 2019 to no longer enforce the uploading of evidence of 25 / 30 hours of CPD). RAP agreed that there should be consequences if audits are not completed satisfactorily.

RAP suggested that a formal letter should be sent by post to members selected for audit, reminding them of the responsibilities of their membership and requesting that they do their audit within the allotted timeframe and to the required standard, stating clearly that otherwise their registered membership will be at risk if they don’t. There was also a suggestion that we seek reasonable evidence for members applying to postpone their audit because of e.g. ill health or a significant life event.

There was a discussion about keeping the right balance between ACC’s responsibility as a regulator of standards, and our parallel role of supporting and developing our members. Adopting a more formal tone through the proposed letter was seen as a good way forward.

1. **PSA Renewal (March 2020) Obligations**

ACC will receive the PSA renewal form for registration renewal in February 2020. This will have to be completed by March 2020. There was a list of actions that ACC have either been asked by the PSA to do, or that we have committed to do for this next cycle. ACC have made a positive progress against many of the areas on the PSA list. The following were discussed in the meeting.

* ***Develop a Whistleblowing & Duty of Candour Guidelines for Registrants***

KS reported that the duty of candour discussed at the recent PSA conference. The duty of Candour that applied in counselling was somewhat different to that covered in the recent PSA conference. The conference focused on medical practice (for e.g. surgeons who made mistakes in the operating theatre) and the duty to discuss these mistakes with the patient, rather than cover them up. As a possible help to other accredited registers, the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council presented their policy which was to advice registrants to ring their insurance company before admitting to making a mistake. This model would not work in counselling – where mistakes in the counselling process need to be addressed where possible at the time they occur (rather than interrupting a session to phone the insurance company). KS believes this duty is already part of ACC’s ethics and practice standards but needs to think this through a bit more.

Similarly, whistleblowing is covered by the complaints process – but it does not adequately cover the situation where the complainer’s identity needs to be protected. Counsellors need to be protected from malicious complaints, and even where a client may have a good reason to claim anonymity, the evidence presented is likely to identify them to the counsellor. For a third party the situation is slightly different, as it may be possible to investigate without identifying the source of the information. Whistleblowing within ACC as an organisation or within affiliated organisations also needs to be considered.

* ***Determine consequences of noncompliance with CPD requirement for renewing registrants***

Discussed above in relation to the audit process. ACC have good guidelines on CPD and will give registrants every opportunity to be able to meet the 25 / 30 hours requirement for CPD each year by providing a range of activities that count as CPD. ACC will look favourably on registrants who have a genuine and acceptable reason for not having completed the CPD requirement. However, registrants who do not want to undertake the required annual CPD, may have their membership terminated.

* ***Set out the competencies of Counselling that integrates Christianity & Counselling*** –

This was the potential collaborative project discussed at the meeting in August. HC will send a document to KS to use for the PSA submission. This is an extract of her PHD thesis (a work in progress) outlining the findings of her research to date.

* ***Re-do risk model using the PSA’ updated risk matrix***

KS reported that current risk matrix has been added to over the years and it is hard to track the development of risk management over time. The PSA have issued a revised risk matrix, and there is some merit for ACC in effect ‘starting again’ and thinking afresh about risks impacting on counselling members/registrants.

* ***Updating ACC’s knowledge base***

This has happened through good articles in the Accord magazine, information on the ACC website, training and conferences. However KS reported that updating information on the website remains on the long list of things to do.

* ***Review /revise conflicts of interest policy (the ACC board)***

SMR reported that the first stage of this is completed. As the Board reviews its internal processes there may be further room for enhancement.

* ***Improved recruitment process for board members***

Completed and tested through recruitment of 3 new board members.

* ***Procedure for dealing with situations where Board member disagrees with Board decision***

Planned for 2020. SMR stated her intention is to equip the Board for their roles through training, providing copies of ACC policies and guidelines, and also gifting a book on governance to all Board members. Documenting a procedure is planned for early in the new year.

SMR provided summary figures of complaints in progress.

1. **Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) Programme Update (KS)**

KS reported that she had some time ago raised an issue with the PSA on behalf of one of our registrants, the outcome of which has application for all our accredited counselling members. The registrant is a highly experienced counsellor who has worked in a GP setting for a number of years. The service through which she provided this counselling was taken over by an IAPT contracted supplier and counsellors were given the choice of joining the BACP and applying for BACP Accreditation or losing their position. The issue has been raised through the PSA with NHS England and after a period of many months we recently had the opportunity to present a case to the IAPT governing group that recruitment to NHS IAPT counselling positions should be opened to ACC Accredited counsellors. The matter will be considered at a meeting on the 16th December.

1. **ACC Structure Update (SMR)**SMR updated RAP with plans on the re-structure of ACC management.
2. **Summary /Review of Audit outcomes**

DS read out the report on Audit outcomes for 2019 which had been submitted to the panel, highlighting some of the areas where problems commonly occur. These are for example with registrants not filling in the forms properly, supervisors and sponsors failing to sign sections and more rarely incomplete submissions.

The panel discussed some ideas about how these problems may be prevented and suggested that ACC take a more hard-line approach with regard to incomplete audits, for example setting out some sanctions for late or incomplete submissions These could include having to undergo audit in the following year.

DS reported that she is now pre-filling audit requests to help improve the accuracy of information. This means that she takes e.g. their registration number, contact details, sponsor and supervisors details from their record on the system – asking them to update any information that has changed. The panel though that this was an improvement to the process.

**AOB**

1 – SMR has now received the new lease document from PMR. We are still going to be looking at new premises later in the year but have put the move on hold for a while as ACC have a new CEO / Director of Pastoral Care to bring on board ACC will need to vacate the building by December 2021, so we have almost 2 years.

2 – The Children and Young People conferences in London and Leeds went well with 198 attendees booked in for London and 91 booked in for Leeds.

3 – The Archbishop of Canterbury held a Mental Health day at Lambeth Palace and invited SMR and HC. SMR is potentially being invited to run a workshop on Prayer Ministry.

4 – SMR is also doing a webinar on Self Care for funeral directors in 2020.

The meeting ended at 5.00pm

**First meeting in 2020 is on Friday 24th April**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No**  **In Meeting** | **What** | **Who** | **By When** | **Outcome** |
| 1-03/05/19 | Guidance as to what to say on Find a Counsellor | KS | 2020 |  |
| 2-03/05/19 | Update and finalise new complaints process | KS | 30/03/20 |  |
| 1-30/08/19 | Should personal counselling be considered as CPD activity? Review other counselling professional bodies policy and discuss with ACC assessors. | KS | 2020 |  |
| 1-13/12/19 | Updated draft policy on ‘who can be a supervisor’ to include words ‘where possible’ and to set out the need for clear rationale/defence of dual relationships and mitigating factors/actions relating to the risks | KS | 30/03/20 |  |
| 2-13/12/19 | Revise audit process to include the posting of a formal letter, requesting evidence of postponement and setting out consequences of non-compliance with the process or unsatisfactory submissions | KS | 30/03/20 |  |
| 3-13/12/19 | Supply paper charting progress towards setting competencies for counselling in a Christian context | HC | 1/03/20 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |