

Minutes of Societies Council Meeting
Wednesday 6th March 2019
At the Societies' Offices, Worthing via Skype

In Attendance

Vicky Parkinson (CEO Societies)
Freya Bottomley (Societies Deputy CEO)
Karen Finneran (Societies Administration Manager)
Samantha Hurdley (Societies Public Protection Officer)
Steve Roche (Lay Council Member)
Ros Wright (Lay Council Member)
Rob Kidd (Lay Council Member)

Apologies

Dr Chris Forester (Chair of Societies)
Kate Mahoney (Head of Professional Standards)

The meeting was opened, and all were welcomed to the meeting. Thanks were given to all for attending.

It was confirmed by all that there were no declarations of interest.

The minutes of the last Council Meeting on the 14th of November were agreed by the Council. There were no changes to make to the minutes, and no questions or comments from the Council.

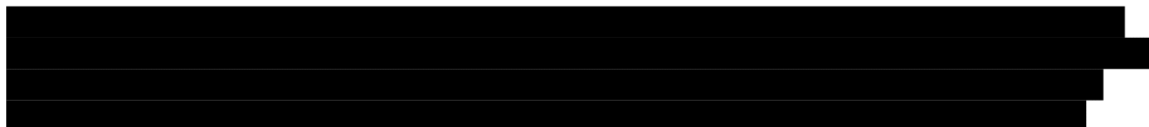
Report to Council from CEO

Since the last meeting the Society has been busy dealing with Policy, politics and profession. Its that's time of year when our PSA renewal is due to be completed and submitted in the next 2 weeks.

The lease on our current property is due to expire in January 2020. We have had a site visit and discussion with the existing landlord who has confirmed we may stay in the building and take on a new lease again on the same terms. The building is an old building so we have been searching the market for a newer property, however there is currently not anything that meets our needs with many being of a open plan style . We did find a local property which needed work to bring it up to standard but the landlord of the property was unwilling to negotiate a free period for the renovations. We will continue to search but in the knowing we may stay where we are. We are not looking to increase costs.

Since our last meeting the Society closed the year in a good position. Staff appraisals were conducted and at the request of the staff a new structure to pay rises and bonus system was created. From February all staff now have monthly targets and must report and document how they are assisting the Society to develop and how targets are being met.

As per our last meeting we are still awaiting the new CRM which is due to be launched in the Spring providing there are no set-backs. We have some further charts and graphs to submit which has been difficult to timetable given other projects with immediate time constraints overtaking.



A great meeting with Dominic recently at the Society head offices to discuss how we can develop a Gender, Sexual and Relationship Diversity section for members, similar to that of the CYP section. It was a most useful meeting with ideas such as video content, support groups and some documents to support good practice being suggested. We have a handful of members willing to assist, as well as Pink Therapy kindly offering support also. It is now at the stage of collating 'who can do what'. [REDACTED]

Following on from the last meeting and Wayne's resignation from the Council, recruitment of a new council member is required. It is hoped this will be concluded for them to join the next meeting.

Since our last meeting we have recruited a new team member Charlotte Cobbs to our Training Standards Team but we have not recruited a new Administrator for the Admin Team. It is felt that the Admin Team re coping very well without an additional team member at present.

The SCoPEd has now been released and the professional fallout has been unprecedented. The Society has responded after consultation with its members. The BACP are trying to make a distinguishing tiers of professional competencies along the lines of "qualified counsellors", "advanced counsellors" and "psychotherapists" despite their report in 2009 where they reported there was no difference they now have a completely different stance in 2019.

[REDACTED]

The CEO reported that off the back of SCoPEd and consulting with our members, we also took the opportunity to ask our membership for their viewpoint on other key issues. From the results which can be found on our website, we have made clear policy statements to show our position, making things clearer. This has been well received and feedback has been nothing but positive. Full details as follows:

1. Membership Grades Members were asked whether the Society should view becoming a qualified counsellor as an acceptable "end point" for members, with grade progression being seen as an entirely voluntary process undertaken to increase employability; or the Society should take the view that becoming a qualified counsellor should be a temporary starting point in their career, with higher grades being acknowledged by the Society as more advanced in practice. 75.8% of respondents wish the Society to view becoming a qualified counsellor as an acceptable end point, with grade progression viewed as a voluntary process undertaken to increase employability.

Policy Statement: The Society will promote members of all grades being seen as equal in practice, with the benchmark for qualified counsellor being seen as the entrance to the Society's Accredited Register. The Society will promote job opportunities for registrants and ensure that potential employers are aware that being on an Accredited Register should be deemed sufficient to be considered for job opportunities for qualified counsellors. The Society will adopt the policy that additional membership grades beyond registration are undertaken voluntarily in order to increase employability, whilst continuing to acknowledge the additional work and experience necessary to meet the criteria for these membership grades. The Society will consider other "benchmarking" opportunities for qualified counsellors who do not wish to progress to higher grades beyond registration, for example, certifying years in practice. We will consult members about this in due course.

The Council agreed with this Policy statement.

2. Challenging Unpaid Work Members were asked whether the Society should actively challenge the role of unpaid work in counselling and campaign on this issue. 71.7% of respondents wish the Society to actively challenge this role and campaign on the issue.

Policy Statement: The Society will make it more explicit that we oppose the culture of unpaid work for qualified counsellors. We will campaign by writing to key stakeholders including Government, charities and so forth in order to challenge this practice. We will issue press releases on this issue and appoint an Unpaid Work Officer to monitor the way in which the expectation of unpaid work is being used by organisations in their requirement or

expectation of qualified counsellors to undertake unpaid work. We will allocate resources to campaign for counsellors deserving to be paid and launching a "No to No Pay" campaign.

The Council concur that this is not the only sector looking into this expectation of no to no pay.

The Council agreed this policy statement.

3. The Accredited Register Programme Members were asked, following our previous survey on regulation options, whether the Society should campaign to make the Accredited Registers programme compulsory for counselling and psychotherapy. 74.9% of respondents agreed that they wished the Society to adopt this as policy. Policy Statement: The Society will campaign to preserve the current Accredited Register programme as the right regulatory model for counselling, and furthermore, campaign for a change in the law to make being on an Accredited Register a requirement to practise as a counsellor or psychotherapist.

The Council agreed this policy statement.

4. Private Practice as a Qualified Counsellor Members were asked whether or not a qualified counsellor should be considered to be equipped to be in private practice and make choices about the suitability of potential private clients. 78.8% of respondents confirmed that qualified counsellors should be considered to be equipped for private practice.

Policy Statement: The Society's policy is that, on joining our Accredited Register and being recognised as a qualified counsellor, that this should be considered as confirmation of suitability for private practice. The Society will examine and if necessary, modify or make explicit within our training standards that all training courses leading to registration will have to demonstrate and confirm that they so equip our registrants, and require our routes to registration to demonstrate this.

The Council agreed this policy statement.

5. Widening Work Opportunities through legal challenges Members were asked whether the Society should consider appropriate legal action to ensure that work opportunities were not unfairly closed off from our members. 92.2% of respondents agreed that the Society should now take a legal approach to ensure equality of work opportunity.

Policy Statement The Society believes that work opportunities should be available to all qualified counsellors on an Accredited Register. Where work opportunities require further demonstration of additional qualifications, experience or personal development, these should again be equally available to suitably qualified registrants irrespective of their individual professional affiliations. The Society will gather evidence of restrictive practices in employment and instruct expert solicitors with the view to mounting appropriate legal challenges to end these practices in our profession.



The Council agreed this policy statement.

6. Representing Psychotherapy Members were asked whether the Society should make it more explicit that we represent both counsellors and psychotherapists in our communications. 88% of respondents confirmed that the Society should make this more explicit.

Policy Statement: The Society will make it explicit that we represent the interests of both counsellors and psychotherapists, and reconfirms the variety of our membership and their rights to use those titles appropriate to their professional self-understanding and training. We will consult with our members as to how better to

communicate our role as a stakeholder in counselling and psychotherapy, and monitor developments in the profession in this regard.

[REDACTED]

The Council had no further questions for the CEO.

Report to Council from Administration Manager

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As mentioned earlier by the CEO the CRM upgrade is pencilled in for April, final processes are being reviewed and we hope to see the platform for testing over the next few weeks.

Sales of all our Online CPD courses continue to grow year on year. [REDACTED]

The Admin manger summarised that CPD events for 2018 finished with 66 of the 76 courses on the calendar going ahead. There has been great feedback from attendees and all negative feedback has been addressed, most were in relation to the venue and/or parking. For 2019 there are planning 127 courses over the UK but still leaving the summer break free, this will mean more variety and more locations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Admin Manager is continuing to email all new members for both Societies at their 4 month anniversary, this exercise remains a positive engagement with our members.

[REDACTED]

The Council asked if we have an idea of school counsellors in the Society. The Society does not hold data on individuals of where they work although it would have been on their application form it is not a requirement of membership to disclose this information. The Society has though worked with the APPG for the white paper that was issued last year asking the Government for a Cabinet Minister fir Children and Young People.

There were no further questions for the Administration Manager.

Report to Council from Deputy CEO

The Deputy CEO advised that she had again been busy since the last meeting attending many meetings in November and December although at the moment the next meetings were not scheduled until March.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Society has a new EAP, Spectrum Wellness who currently provide EAP services in Ireland and are now branching into the UK. They are looking to work with our Registrants, an email has been sent out to the members asking if they would wish to work with Spectrum and within a few days of sending this the sign up, 40 Registrants had signed up to work with them.

The Deputy CEO confirmed upcoming meetings with the MOU, an invitation to attend the South East Personalised Care Launch event, British Standards Committee gala dinner invite with Mates In Mind who we work with in the construction industry and also Place2Be a group to help improve gender and ethnic diversity in counselling.

The Hypnotherapy Society has issued an open invitation to its registrants to become Ambassadors for the Society and we envisaged 3 positions. We have currently confirmed 2 and hope to complete the process for the 3rd shortly and then the information will be added to the website.

The Society continues to grow its membership benefits with 3 new offers, Cruse 10% off their conference for NCS and this is in addition to their early bird offer, Counselling and psychotherapy conference – discounted rate for NCS members and finally Jessica Kingsley Publishers who are offering a discount code for NCS members to receive a 20% off discount that can be applied to all of JKP's books. In addition to the offer JKP are also offering the opportunity to our members to review books for them.

The Deputy CEO advised that a number of job adverts have been sent to NCS Registrants, either for specific areas or across the UK and continues to add jobs and other paid positions to the Registrant Opportunities page in the members area of the website.

The Deputy CEO advised that due to the continuation of the recognition work by the society we have 3 new organisations on board since the last meeting: Paycare - HS Registrants now listed under their 'Professional Therapy Treatments Covered by Paycare', Spectrum - (EAP) confirmed that they will accept NCS Registrants [REDACTED]

The Society continues to work on current blocks for NCS Registrants with the Deputy CEO continuing to write to organisations if they do not currently list us. These remain to be followed up for those that have not made any changes or provided a reason for not including the NCS/HS. We add any relevant jobs to our 'opportunities for registrants' page in the members' area of the website.

The Society online profile via LinkedIn continues to grow with some interesting messages, new members and potentially a new HS training school coming from this route

Lastly the Deputy CEO informed the committee this would be her last for a while as she was due to go on maternity leave in May 2019.

Report to Council from Public Protection Officer (PPO)

The PPO advised that further information about particular cases can be found in the full report sent to the Council, but on the whole the main objective was pushing forward mediation in relation to complaints to benefit everyone, and this has been seen as a benefit to registrants.

The PPO advised the last quarter had been fairly quiet. Work on the current complaints continues to work in a sensitive and proactive manner. The first stage being the screening of any complaint which lasts 28 days and then talking with the people involved. [REDACTED]

The Council asked for the process of complaints. The first stage was screening by the PPO, there are no rights to appeal at this stage. Formal complaint to the Assessment Panel, this is a paperwork exercise and this stage has an appeal process which would then go to an independent panel. All appeals are seen by a separate panel and give an independent decision to the Society.

The Council asked if we published our complaints. The PPO confirmed we did not at the initial stage of complaint, but we do inform other Accredited Register holders of any complaints as they also do to us. When a complaint has been heard by the panel then the AR is updated accordingly such as removal from register or sanctions and the Society website is updated in the Have a concern – Outcomes page.

The Council had no further questions for the PPO.

Report to Council from the Head of Professional Standards

Since the previous Council Meeting this department has seen significant growth, the NCS has 5 new training providers – EMDR Centre London, Online Training for Counsellors, Calm Minds, Fortis Therapy and City of Bristol College.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Standards Team continue to speak to training providers who have expressed an interest on becoming a member and will continue over the next few months to converse and support them from the beginning of their journey and develop that relationship.

The Standards Officer had recently attended the MOU2 meetings in London. This committee continues to drive the movement to eradicate conversion therapy in the UK.

The Standards Team now has a new member of staff Charlotte Cobbs who is in training and is a valued member of the team.

There were no questions in regards to this report.

A.O.B.

The CEO will send through potential dates for the next Council Meeting, likely to take place in July.