
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 28 April 2021, Teams Meeting at 10am

Present: Moira Sibbald (MS) - Lay Chair
Tamara Abood (TA), BACP Committee Member
Jo Burns (JB), BACP Committee Member (14/21 only)
Humza Chaudhry (HC), Lay Committee Member
Stacey Goldman (SG), BACP Committee Member
Ewan Malcolm (EM), Lay Committee Member
Philip Matthews (PM), Lay Committee Member
Velia Soames (VS), Lay Committee Member

In attendance: Fiona Ballantine Dykes (FBD), Chief Professional Standards Officer
Christina Docchar (CD), Registrar
Gemma Fay, Complaints Processor Case Manager
Beckie Grace (BG), Assistant Registrar - Entry and Maintenance
Michael Golding (MG), BACP Governor
Sarah Millward (SM), Administration Manager (19/21)
Heather Roberts (HR), BACP Governor
Tracy Shrimpton (TS), Clerk

14/21 Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed the Committee members, in particular, Humza Chaudhry, who was attending his first meeting, and BACP staff and Governors. Apologies were received from Mervyn Wynne-Jones.

There were no new declarations of conflicts of interest.

The Committee noted that Jo Burns was resigning from the Committee; she attended briefly to say goodbye and the Chair thanked her for her hard work.

15/21 Minutes of the last meeting 27 January 2021

- **Accuracy** - The minutes of the meeting were agreed as an accurate record, subject to the removal of previous redactions and highlighted items.
- **Matters Arising** - Paper A was noted with additional comments as follows:

27/20 Navigation of the website

The Committee noted that a web restructure project was underway and included public consultation and a meeting with the Register team. Implementation of changes would take place within 6-12 months. The Committee was invited to send any specific feedback to the Registrar.

Action: Committee Members/CD

34/20 Committee Recruitment

The Committee noted that this matter had now been reopened following the resignation of Jo Burns. The Chair would be discussing filling the role with the Chair of the Board of Governors and provide an update at the August meeting.

Action: MS

06/21 Audit sample size: The Committee noted that the Assistant Registrar, Entry and Maintenance, would be providing an update in her report.

11/21 AOB: The Committee noted that, following a request from a member of the Committee, the Registrar had contacted a researcher in relation to her supervision research project and signposted useful information. The researcher had fed back suggestions for the Upstream Prevention initiative. A further meeting would take place in June.

- **Redactions of Minutes**

The Committee agreed that full minutes should be available publicly unless there was a specific reason for redaction, such as litigation, the provision of legal advice, data protection or confidential matters. Any requirement for redaction would be agreed at the end of each meeting under Any Other Business.

Action: MS/CD/TS

16/21 Departmental tactical plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

CD spoke to the circulated paper and the Committee noted the suggested additional Key Performance Indicators to measure delivery to the public protection strategy and regulatory functions. The Committee noted that this would be a two-stage process, with associated evidence and metrics relating to the KPIs being brought to the August meeting of the Committee for consideration. The Committee also noted the appointment of a Business Insights Manager to look at KPIs across the whole of the organisation.

The Committee agreed that the third KPI be amended to read:

BACP enhances the professionalism of members by promoting best practice and by offering learning and training resources by which a member can develop as a safe and professional practitioner.

Action: CD

The Chair noted the breadth of the work of the department and expressed some concern that the tactical plan might be over-ambitious, given the resources of the department; this would be discussed in more depth under Paper C.

17/21 PSA Accreditation application

CD gave a brief update on BACP's register reaccreditation. The Committee noted that alongside the standard requirements, the PSA was also carrying out a scheduled audit of professional conduct cases. The Committee also noted that CD and GF had a productive conversation with the PSA in relation to addressing the backlog of hearings and mitigations put in place.

18/21 Professional Conduct statistics

CD spoke to the circulated paper and the Committee noted that the backlog of cases awaiting Investigatory and Assessment Committees had been completely cleared and that these were functioning extremely well in a virtual setting. The Committee also noted that the team had a plan to clear the backlog of hearings as a priority and alongside the outsourcing project, extensive research had been undertaken, processes and guidance documents developed and technical solutions sourced. The pool of external contractors had also been expanded and both staff and contractors had all been trained to work in a virtual setting. Following successful piloting of virtual hearings, the team recommended that hearings be held virtually rather than physically, wherever possible.

The Committee also noted alongside the difficulties posed by Covid-19 to holding hearings, there had been an exponential rise in complaints, which had created further challenges; the Register Risk Register had been updated to reflect the increased risk posed by the hearings' backlog and the PSA had also been informed.

The Committee noted that the Senior Leadership Team was aware of the scale of the challenge in addressing both the rise in complaints and the hearings backlog and were fully supportive of the need to increase resources.

The Committee requested comparative professional conduct data so it could assess progression towards addressing the backlog. It noted that the department did have a published timescale document, which could be used to further develop the data spreadsheet, and this would be circulated for information.

Action: CD/TS

The Committee also raised questions relating to how members had been kept up-to-date in the way hearings were being held virtually and the Register team were asked consider how they might raise awareness. It was also agreed that communications to members could also help to signpost towards resources that were already in existence.

Action: CD

The Committee requested an update on the backlog for the meeting in August.

Action: CD/JO'D

The Committee approved the recommendation to hold virtual hearings as the default position. This position would be reviewed following the first disciplinary track hearings.

Action: CD

The Committee agreed that a reasonable timescale to clear the backlog of hearings was 12-14 months and noted the information on the increase in staff required to achieve this. The Committee noted that that action would be taken promptly to recruit the required staff. Reporting on dealing with the backlog would be part of the regular reporting to the Committee.

Action: CD

19/21 BACP's Get Help with Counselling Concerns

SM spoke to the circulated paper. The Committee noted that the relaunch of the Ask Kathleen Service had gone smoothly and that the team had been busy publicising the service through Therapy Today, newsletters, other divisional journals and online events. Further plans for awareness-raising included online videos and member information sheets. The Committee acknowledged the unique nature of the service and requested that they be kept up-to-date with half-yearly reports, to include data, trends and how the information collected feeds into the Upstream Prevention initiative.

Action: SM/CD

20/21 PSA review of the accredited register programme consultation

CD provided an update on the accredited register programme. The Committee noted that the PSA had provided a report in response to the consultation, highlighting themes of recognition of the scheme, criteria for accreditation and financial sustainability. Although the PSA consultation is complete, it does not give a clear indication of next steps for accredited registers which are still awaited. In the summer the PSA intends to give accredited registers a clearer sense of their thinking around some immediate changes (due shortly) but there are aspects that will be delayed because of the other consultations.

21/21 Social Media Guidance

CD spoke to the circulated paper and it was noted that the review of the guidance had been expedited in light of several Board members' experiences of social media and the Professional Standards Authority recommendation to '*ensure that there is emphasis on confidentiality and to include guidance on inappropriate behaviour on social media whether in a professional or private context*'. The Committee noted that, although the guidance had now been approved and published, the document will be regularly reviewed and any feedback would be passed on to the Communications Team for the next version. The Committee noted that it had been very well received by members and they also felt it to be a very useful document.

The Committee provided feedback in relation to identification of members of clients online.

Action: CD

22/21 Reports

CPSO: The Committee noted the report. The Committee noted that:

- Delivery to strategy had progressed and this was evident through the organisational KPIs.

- A Committee review was underway and that a report had been produced for the Board with findings so far.
- Consultation had taken place with relevant groups in relation to the standard setting for the proportion of training that could take place online as a result of Covid-19. This was subject to change, depending on the course of the pandemic.

Registrar: The Committee noted the report. The Chair asked how guidance from the Committee meetings could be tracked to measure how useful its input is and CD proposed that papers included decisions taken directly as a result of Committee feedback and recommendations. The Committee noted that the team felt that the relationship worked well and valued the contribution of the Committee in informing its thinking.

Assistant Registrar E&M: The Committee noted the report. The Committee noted that:

- The Certificate of Proficiency External Examiner’s meeting had taken place the previous week as part of the Register’s quality assurance processes and monitoring of EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion). This had been a very positive meeting.
- The Learning Management Centre had now been launched to all members and registrants would now be able to plan and log their Continuing Professional Development through that system.

Assistant Registrar PC: The Committee noted the report. The Committee noted that the role of Business Analyst to map processes in the professional conduct function and streamline functions, with an end view to creating a case management, was currently awaiting feedback before being taken forward to the Programme Board. The Chair fully supported the proposal and commented that, given BACP’s growing membership, it was important to think about scaling up and automating processes and statistical reports.

23/21 Dates of 2022 Meetings

The Committee noted the 2022 meetings would be held on 27 January, 27 April, 1 September and 28 November.

25/21 AOB

The Committee agreed that there were no matters in the minutes that needed redacting.

26/21 Date of Next Meeting

3 August 2021, 10.00am to 1.00pm, via Microsoft Teams.

SIGNED: DATED:

Circulation List:
PPC Committee

Board of Governors
SMT