

BACP Public Protection Committee Meeting
Wednesday 30th July 2025
MS Teams at 10:00hrs

Report Information

Meeting Date	Wednesday 30 th July 2025
Venue	Teams
Confidential/Non-Confidential	Confidential
Author	Clair Parfrey, Governance officer

Purpose of the Report

To obtain approval	✓	To canvas opinion	
For information/ to note	✓	Regulatory requirement	
To provide advice		To highlight any emerging risks	

Attendees

Committee Members Present	Ciaran Doyle	CD	Committee Member
	Dr Lynette Harborne	LH	Committee Member
	Dr Paul Taylor	PT	Committee Member
	Pippa Menzies	PM	Committee Member
BACP Staff Present	Emma Hayes	EH	Registrar
	Dr Lisa Morrison	DPSP&R	Director of Professional Standards, Policy and Research
	James Walker	JW	Regulatory Manager
	Jo Holmes	JH	Safeguarding Lead
	Susan Dale	SD	Ethic Lead
	Andrew Harvey	AH	Governance Adviser
Apologies	Leon White	LW	Committee Member
	Beckie Grace	BG	Assistant Registrar

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Meeting Chair: Ciaran Doyle	
Item No	General business
1.0	Preliminary matters
1.1	<p>Welcome, introductions, apologies and quoracy.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all in attendance. Apologies were noted from Leon White and Beckie Grace.</p> <p>The meeting was noted as quorate.</p>
1.2	<p>Declarations of interest.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
1.3	<p>Minutes of last meeting and Action tracker updates</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2025 were agreed.</p> <p>Action: The Chair to sign the minutes for 28th May 2025 on behalf of the committee.</p> <p>The tracker was updated.</p> <p>Action 1024P3.8 EH gave an overview of the standalone PPC annual report that is published on our website. It speaks primarily to the operational activity completed within a calendar year of the register function rather than the work of the PPC as a committee and raises public awareness of the work of the register in protecting the public. The Committee Chair writes a preface for the report. In its current format the report is poorly utilised document and could be improved to create more impact. Until a new Chair is in place the existing report will continue to be produced.</p> <p>It has been suggested that moving forwards this could be combined into the AGM report. Alternatively, it could be part of the annual impact report.</p> <p>Action 0525P3.2 The Boundary violations item was removed from the tracker as it will be a fixed item on the agenda for Q1 and Q3 meetings.</p> <p>Action 0525P4.1 The Chair position has been vacant since November 2024. Consideration to be given to paid advertisements in the Guardian and Inclusive Boards. Committee members were asked to share the DPSP&R's post on LinkedIn.</p>
1.4	<p>Items requiring redaction.</p> <p>Item 3.1 of the minutes from both the February and May meetings require reaction.</p>

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	Action: Minutes of February and May meetings to be redacted and then published
2	Briefings and Reports
2.1	Register Development Report <p>The Registrar spoke to her paper which gives an update on the current situation and was pleased to report that BACP have been recognised for the quality of our Member support in the register for 2 national awards. We have been shortlisted and results will be announced later in the year. The member support service was set up to support members who are subject to a complaint through professional conduct. The process of recognising whether the complaint is upheld or not can be a particularly traumatic experience. We provide an online telephone-based service where we provide emotional listening support. This is not counselling, it is a series of six sessions which can be used at any point throughout. It is fully funded by BACP and has received good feedback from Members that have used it.</p> <p>The update on the PSA annual check is an operational report that goes to the PSA focusing on all of the standards that cut across the organisation and looks at it's broadly procedural and operational. It confirms whether we are doing what we said we would do in terms of our published policies and documents and how do we substantiate that. It's a very light touch this year and it will be again for next year. From our full reaccreditation, in 2024 there were one condition and two recommendations. These have now been met. We are putting some information on our website to ensure the public are aware of the the the limitations of counselling psychotherapy, not an emergency service.</p> <p>Positive feedback has been noted from a member in the PSA public consultation which was highlighted by the PSA.</p> <p>We are looking at the impact of the Ethical Framework review on our professional conduct procedures and ways that they can be improved.</p> <p>Recruitment is underway for a new registrar as EH leaves BACP in mid-August. The Assistant Registrar will provide transitional cover.</p>
2.2	Serious Case Report <p>The Regulatory manager gave an overview of the serious cases raised in the past quarter. There have been 4 new cases where we've had to resort to an interim suspension order on members of the organisation. The first concerned an individual who was an NCPS registrant under investigation for safeguarding issues and harassment of parents of the children that she was counseling. She was subsequently suspended by NCPS in January and her registration was withdrawn in February. Whilst this investigation was going on, she was processing an applicator</p>

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to join BACP. She failed to advise us of the investigation and subsequent suspension. Therefore we have taken steps to suspend her.

The second case is a member self-disclosing that he'd received a criminal conviction for common assault in a domestic violence case. This was in Spain, where he received a four-year four-month custodial sentence, suspended for two years and a 12-month restraining order.

The next two cases are unusual, and they're the first effectively of their kind, both were BACP members who failed to participate in the register audit programme despite extensive efforts by staff. They chose to renew their membership during that process. This went to an independent panel last week and their membership has been suspended pending the outcome of disciplinary cases.

We're currently working with the safeguarding team who are supporting us with a vulnerable complainant who has severe anxiety. We are getting 30 to 50 emails at a time demanding action on our behalf, which is slowing us down because we spend more time responding to the complainant than chasing the case itself. The Safeguarding Lead is providing excellent support whilst we process the case.

We are also working with the Safeguarding lead to rationalise our safeguarding risk management processes within professional conduct and to identify any potential improvements in terms of risk management and risk assessment so that we have a more joined up approach.

The committee discussed potential reasons for the lack of engagement with the audit and clarity was provided on the support available.

3. Updates

3.1 Safeguarding of members

The Safeguarding Lead stated that following the recent audits by NSPCC and Ann Craft, she has been appointed as the Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead for BACP on a full-time basis from 1st September rather than as a bolt on to an additional role. This will provide the resources to act on the suggestions put forward in the audit.

Over the past 12 months there have been 244 concerns raised, a third of which relate to ethics. We can identify trends and themes and as a result have noticed that we that although we are good at signposting we do not always have time to follow up that this has been utilised.


It was noted that safeguarding concerns are generally membership led with supplementary contact from Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) who are working with concerns relating to people in a position of trust.

There is a strong relationship with the professional conduct team, and the Safeguarding Lead has worked on 12 cases with them over the year.

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	<p>It is planned that the new dedicated role will allow for the development of tailored training, and a reduction in risk.</p> <p>A further report will be provided in 6 months - at the Q4 meeting</p> <p>The committee discussed the various types of abuse reported under the 'other' category which includes spiritual abuse. It was noted that a refresh of the reporting form is planned which will include expanding the options available.</p> <p>PT offered to discuss his experiences around misogyny in the therapeutic setting, and how we work with an extended group of partners with the Safeguarding Lead.</p> <p>Serious incident reporting is currently via the DPSP&R and the designated trustee (Sekinat Adima). Plans to make this process more transparent are in development.</p> <p>Going forward we have a real opportunity to hugely enhance our offering and ensure that support is offered to areas where it simply wasn't possible to drive things forward previously. There is already a long and extensive action plan, and it will be quite a challenge for the next year or so. The Board was 100% behind the audit and understanding that we needed to make significant improvements, as in terms of both enhanced public protection and the advice and support that we're giving to Members this is such an important area of work.</p> <p>Action: Safeguarding lead to prepare a report for the Q4 meeting in early 2026</p>
3.2	<p>Update from DPSP&R</p> <p>LC commented that the investigation into one of our accredited services and the breach of our ethical framework was concluded in May. We gave the service provider a series of conditions that needed to be met in order for the temporary suspension of their accreditation to be lifted and have worked very closely with the service provider since that time to address some of the issues. Accreditation has now been reinstated. We continue to monitor the service provider to ensure that good practice continues.</p> <p>We have learnt from this situation and put in place revised protocols that ensure that we are asking the right questions of service providers at the point of accreditation and at annual reviews.</p> <p>It is intended to bring a paper to the committee on this subject in the future.</p> <p>As of today's date, there is no movement from government in terms of their appetite to introduce statutory regulation for the counselling and psychotherapy professions. The Department for Health and Social Care continue to review of potential options. We understand this to mean that it's more likely to be an accredited register scheme, run by the PSA , bolstered to enhance public protection. There are meetings planned with both the PSA and with the Department of Health and Social Care officials to understand what that looks like.</p>

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	<p>SD joined the meeting to give an update on the ethical framework review. She reported that 23 data sources have been analysed including data from professional conduct, our ethics service, our Get Help service and from member surveys/consultations.</p> <p>SD commented that it has been noted that the purpose and clarity of the current ethical framework needs to be improved. The landscape of the profession is changing therefore emerging and changing issues that were arising including: AI, online counselling, and working from different countries. This has led to complex legal and public protection issues.</p> <p>Currently members turn to the ethical framework when a situation arises rather than embedding ethics into their practice. Our aim would be to include the framework as a decision-making tool for working within relationships, to have ethics running through that, and to have some simple guidance of how to make ethical decisions and have a rationale for an ethical practice.</p> <p>We are also hearing from the panels of the conduct procedure that they needed more clarity in our ethical framework to make it effective for current conduct purposes.</p> <p>We are looking to use plain English in a succinct and clear way and plan to produce a suite of resources to support the framework and assist members.</p> <p>The next steps are for a final proof reading before the draft goes to the Board in September. This will be followed by a consultation period. Final Board acceptance will be followed by a review after 12 months.</p>
4.	Any other Business
4.1	<p>LH raised a concern relating to public protection, safeguarding risk, etcetera, about supervision. She was concerned that the quality and competence of supervision did not appear to be standardised. The Registrar confirmed that BACP has a supervision competency framework which she could share and that supervision is part of the audit process. Supervisors report on the supervision that they give and have the opportunity to raise any concerns.</p> <p>Action Registrar to share supervision competency framework with LH and the committee</p> <p>The Committee wished the Registrar well in new life in Australia and thanked her for her contributions to the register and work of the committee.</p>
4.2	<p>Next meeting:</p> <p>1st September 2025 - extra meeting to discuss accredited course criteria</p> <p>12th November 2025 - Q3 standard meeting</p> <p>Meeting closed at 11:45am</p>

Actions	
Agenda Item	Description
1.3	The Chair to sign the minutes for 28 th May 2025 on behalf of the committee
1.4	Minutes of February and May meetings to be redacted and then published
3.1	Safeguarding lead to prepare a report for the Q4 meeting in early 2026
4.1	Registrar to share supervision competency framework with LH and the committee

Approved by Committee on	12.11.25
Signed by Chair as approved	 Dr Paul Taylor - Chair