



National Counselling Society & National Hypnotherapy Society
SOCIETY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, 4 August 2021 – 11.00am, via Zoom

In attendance:

Liz McElligott (Societies Chair)
Freya Bottomley (Interim CEO)
Amy Bristow (Business Operations Manager)
Nina Clyde (Executive Assistant - minutes)
Jacqui Gumbrell (Training Standards Assistant)
Camilla Hyland (Head of Membership Services)
Rachael King (Professional Conduct Officer)
Elaine Lighten (Communications Manager)
Jyles Robillard-Day (Head of Engagement & Development)
Rob Kidd (Lay Council Member)
Harriet Mortimer (Lay Council Member)
Phil Rees (Independent Assessor)
Tina Russell (Lay Council Member)
Ted Sangster (Lay Council Member)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Kate Mahoney, Head of Professional Standards.

Freya welcomed everyone and introduced Phil Rees who is observing the meeting as part of his Independent Assessor Role.

Liz officially opened the meeting and thanked all present for attending. It was noted that Ros Wright was non longer a Lay Council Member.

2 Minutes of the last meeting 21 April 2021

The minutes of the last Council Meeting held on 21 April 2021 were agreed by the Council, with no amendments or questions.

Liz introduced herself and explained the new format of the meeting.

3 Matters Arising

None.

4 Report from Interim CEO, Freya Bottomley

There were no questions from Council on the report.

[REDACTED] This was agreed by Council, but would go out to members to vote.

Freya gave an update regarding the PSA HS renewal. All information was submitted to the PSA several weeks ago. Freya has contacted them for an update and as a result has a meeting later today in order to move things forward. All requested information has been provided, and systems have been put in place to ensure ASA guidelines are adhered to.

Further information was requested and extra standards have been put into place with regards to additional registers. More work is required in order to move this forward.

[REDACTED] A further meeting relating to this is due to take place in August or September.

Freya asked the Council for any thoughts around incentives for survey completion. Tina felt it would be a good opportunity to collect data relating to the covid pandemic in terms of the impact on employees, employers, practices and clients. She suggested this as potential content for the magazine.

Rob recommended the use of Focus Groups in addition to a quantitative survey. This could incorporate the opportunity for feedback regarding the potential name change. He felt this work did not require outsourcing, Survey Monkey was comprehensive enough and has reporting tool facilities. Focus Groups could be used to shape the questions that are asked of members.

Tina had spoken to colleagues regarding incentives for completion of surveys, who had raised caution around direct marketing. It would be better to use a prize draw as an incentive for completion. Tina does have a contact which could be useful for outsourcing, if required.

Tina consulted colleagues with regards to Freya's question about the code of ethics wording. It was not required to be stated as a specific requirement, otherwise the code would require tweaking each time there were changes. There is a duty under the Solicitors Regulatory Authority keep up to date with the law. Tina will forward the email confirming this onto Freya.

[REDACTED]

5 Report from Head of Engagement & Development, Jyles Robillard-Day

Jyles stated that the change in his title was much more suited to his role.

SCoPeD Oversight Committee met on 27 July and as a result the draft aims and objectives document is being rewritten by Paul Buckley, the Independent Chair. NCS have pushed for an impact assessment, which will now take place as part of the process.

Ted asked what sort of responses there were in general with regards to recognition work. Nina has been picking up mostly NHS based adverts. As NCS are included in the IAPT manual this has generally brought success [REDACTED]

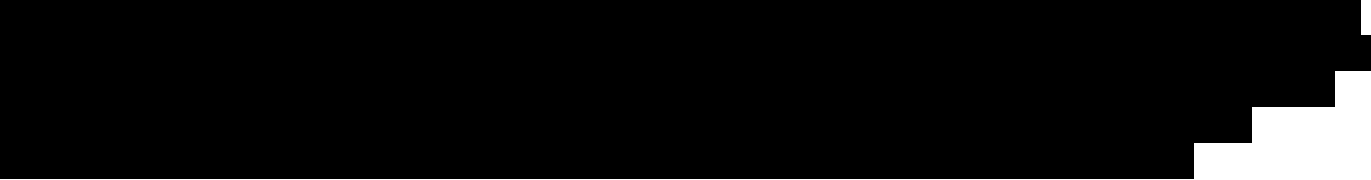
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



6 Report from Head of Membership Services, Camilla Hyland

There were no questions from Council on the report.



Tina asked whether NCS needs to think about promoting differently, for example, for less than the price of a cup of coffee a week/meal out a month. Camilla confirmed that at present members are not able to pay monthly, but this should change soon, which would hopefully mean membership is more affordable.

Freya stated that new reporting tools will highlight areas where there is an influx of membership, which would be really helpful. NCS currently does not charge members to go on the register, whereas some other organisations charge an additional fee for the directory.

7 Report from Head of Professional Standards, Kate Mahoney

There were no questions from Council on the report. As Kate was on leave, her colleague Jacqui Gumbrell was in attendance.

Jacqui asked for comments on a blended learning approach for counselling. Rob stated that during lockdown people were generally more relaxed about participation and standards, but that now expectations are higher with regards to the quality of teaching and participation. He felt it was important to think about and clearly convey what the expectations are for participants, for example break out groups are challenging to monitor. He suggested a pre-event test to ensure all technological issues can be explored, such as access to the platform and to check devices work. From his experience it was better to rewrite a course based on the learning objectives being realistic and based on the leaning platform, rather than trying to adapt a face to face course to online.

Liz asked whether the PSA would get involved in establishing other organisations experience.

Jacqui confirmed that a survey was sent out to all training providers to seek their feedback and thoughts on the situation. Jacqui will feedback Liz's point regarding the PSA to Kate.

Tina recommended looking at 

Jacqui asked whether Council members had any knowledge of other types of training previously only run in a face to face environment, that are now being carried out in a blended approach. Rob felt if making the transition it was important to specify what devices would be required and set clear expectations, such as access via a desktop, video cameras and microphones should be kept on at all times during the training.

Jacqui will ensure this is fed back to training providers.

8 Report from Professional Conduct Officer, Rachael King

Tina felt it would be helpful to report the headline nature of the complaint (i.e. bullying, harassment, data breach). She asked whether any complaints involved data management breaches. Rachael confirmed that they did not. Rachael will consider incorporating headline statements into her next report to Council.

Rob provided two links, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ted asked why there had been a quiet spell and whether this was related to the pandemic/health of professionals. Rachael replied that her role does have peaks and troughs throughout the course of a “normal” year. She has used the quieter time to go over previous records and catch up. Complaints were very quiet during the first lockdown, but did pick up.

Tina has been observing trends, complaints have increased by 117% in the last year. Tina will speak to Rachael separately regarding this and about ethical dilemmas. In her experience most are not ethical dilemmas, but technical ones. In 2019 Tina introduced an online forum where members could post ethical dilemmas and challenges which has been viewed over 120,000 times. Originally volunteers were recruited, but these were not required, as member response was so positive in terms of valuing career advice and emotional support. Tina encourages members to contribute to the bank of ethical dilemmas, which in turn gives insight to what members are facing and also helps develop learning materials. Rachael will contact Tina to discuss further.

9 Report from Business Operations Manager, Amy Bristow

There were no questions from Council on the report.

Amy provided an update with regards to the CRM/CMS solution. Currently looking at three companies and arranging demonstrations with each.

[REDACTED] with the web developers and has been delayed again since May. Amy asked Council members for any suggestions to move the process along. Rob asked whether there was a deadline within the contract. Amy will review the contract.

Tina asked whether there were any penalty clauses relating to delay within the contract. Amy will check this and also check whether payment has already been made.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Amy thanked Lay Council members for their ideas and stated she would look into these options.

With regards to the 3 potential providers for the CRM/CMS system Amy asked whether there were any specific questions she should be asking the providers. Ted felt in light of the discussion [REDACTED] Amy should specifically ask whether there was a named individual or team in charge of the account and how they would deal with customer disappointment and failure of expectations.

Tina felt it was important to use a supplier who has a user group, so that it is possible to link up with other customers to obtain their feedback. Any contract should include a penalty clause, specific support structure and be clear on charges, especially in relation to amends to the system. Tina had been impressed with [REDACTED] who have a good client portfolio and already deal with membership bodies.

Tina asked whether the package would include case management for membership assessment and conduct cases, linked to membership database with an easy reporting function.

Rob felt it was important to have clarity on the cost of adding features and the process of any new function/feature (How? Impact? Would it require a regular programme of updates?). The demonstrations should focus on the back end system that the Society would be using, it's ease of use and main functions. These should be tested on a dummy system with another customer. He felt it was also important that the two Societies are supported by one person and that this should be incorporated into the demonstration.

10 Report from Communications Manager, Elaine Lighten

There were no questions from Council on the report.

Elaine stated that since writing the report the Therapists in Private Practice booklet has been published and sent to members. The total revenue for advertisements since April 2021 is now currently [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Rob felt it was important to focus on what the desired outcome was from the open rate, not just broadly to increase engagement on social media. Need to be clear about what you want people to do as a result of the interaction. He felt being engaged wasn't enough, a clear end goal was required.

Liz asked whether there would be any interest in members putting together an edition. Elaine explained that content is already provided by members for most issues, although it is generally the same group who provide content.

11 Any Other Business

Jyles felt the new format of the meeting was really beneficial.

[REDACTED] Freya felt it would be useful if reports could include more from both Societies each time going forward.

Freya thanked everyone for their time and for sharing their knowledge with the team.

Liz concluded by thanking the Lay Members for their ideas and suggestions.

12 Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next Council Meeting as **Wednesday, 8 December 2021** at 11am, via zoom.