

**Minutes of Societies Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday 24th February 2016**  
**At the Societies' Offices, Worthing via Skype**

**In Attendance**

Victoria Parkinson (Interim CEO Societies)  
Freya Bottomley (Deputy CE Societies)  
Wendy Martin (Public Protection Officer)  
Gerry Willmore (Societies Head of Professional Standards)  
Megan Nunn (Societies Administration Manager)  
Dr Phillip Rees (Independent Assessor)  
Wayne Bateman (Lay Member)

**Apologies**

Dr Chris Forester (Chair of Societies)  
Faith Clarke (Lay Council Member)  
Steve Roche (Lay Council Member)

The meeting was opened and introductions from all were made. Attendees were notified that the meeting was being assessed by the Independent Assessor for the purpose of the Societies Professional Standards Authority report.

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

The Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 were agreed by Council.

A report to council was given by the Interim CEO. Vicky Parkinson has been named Interim CEO for the Societies following the departure of the previous CEO, who has moved into a consultancy role.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Risk Matrix, which forms part of the Accredited Register Annual Renewal, was disseminated to the Council Members prior to the meeting. The Council were asked to comment, and posed no questions or notified the Society of any issues around the Risk Matrix. It was commented how comprehensive the document is.

[REDACTED]

A member of the Societies raised a valuable point that the PSA video that automatically plays when the website is loaded may prevent those searching for Counsellors from being discreet, or from looking at the website confidentially. We have made steps to ensure that the video does not automatically play.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A report to Council was given the Professional Standards Authority. Initially brought to the Council Meeting in June 2015, the Societies have now revised and refreshed the membership grades. Grades are now mapped to Ofqual levels, which the PSA is keen for all Register-holders to do. It is in the interests of the public, as it gives clear guidance to what the membership grades actually mean. They align rigidly to RQF by Ofqual. The Head of Professional Standards states that this is useful information to give to Training Providers, as we can be clear about the minimum Ofqual levels we require to offer Registration to their graduates.

[REDACTED]

The Societies have also made changes to non-Registrant grades to clarify the difference between Registrant and Non-Registrant.

A new category of training course has been introduced, called Advanced/Specialist Training. It is not a full route to the Register, but a high level of training pitched at people who already have a qualification in Counselling and Psychotherapy. The Societies were previously using the term Quality Checked for these courses, which was also used for 5 hour CPD courses, so a new category with new criteria was created for distinction.

[REDACTED]

The Head of Professional Standards has visited our existing Accredited course training providers, and is pleased to report that the courses remain of a high quality, and that he is proud to have them on board

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Head of Professional Standards has attended further meetings around the MoU; there is enthusiasm within the MoU group to extend the MoU to include conversion therapy unacceptability to cover people in doubt about gender identity or those in transition. The NCS is happy to sign the MoU extension.

[REDACTED]

The Independent Assessor queried if it would be prudent for the Independent Assessor to visit the Professional Standards Committee once a year to make comments and compile any necessary reports. The Head of Professional Standards confirmed that it would be a good idea, and that the Independent Assessor would be welcome at any time. Agreed by Council. Skype meetings would not be advisable due to the need to review complex applications, so the Independent Assessor would need to travel to the Society offices. The date is to be arranged with the Professional Standards Committee.

A report to Council was given from the Society Administration Manager [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Skype has been installed in the Societies' Offices, allowing staff to communicate face-to-face – either on a one-to-one basis, or as a conference call – from any location. This provides greater flexibility for Society staff to attend meetings remotely if necessary.

A franking machine has been installed. The Societies were previously using Royal Mail SmartStamp, which became obsolete in December 2015. Franking post provides a discount over standard stamp and SmartStamp costs, so it was determined that the Society will save money in the longer term by switching to a franking machine. Efficiency has also increased as the franking machine allows for quicker stamping than SmartStamp.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Site surveys have been conducted to add an additional 12 points in rooms throughout the Society offices. This will allow for additional staff as required, as well as a hardwired connection to the network in one room that currently has no network connection. It is hoped that the work will be able to go ahead as soon as possible, once all of the quotations for the work have been received.

The Public Protection Officer gave a report to Council. The Public Protection Officer has been in role for four weeks, learning from Interim CEO and Deputy CEO. There have been no new complaints, and so learning about the Admin background and how everything works.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

That there are no current complaints giving the PPO an opportunity to look at other aspects of the Society, including what preventative work we can do to prevent complaints, and allows us to improve and focus on complaints.

The Independent Assessor would like to visit the PPO once a year, and it can be shown in future reports that everyone is held to account. To be tied in with a visit to the Societies, and will review all complaints received since the last report.

The Deputy CE gave a report to Council. It was announced that the recognition of the Societies has grown since the last meeting, and we have received more queries. This is seen as very positive.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

## Any Other Business

[Redacted]

The Society is currently looking for more Lay Council members [Redacted]

The next meeting will be held in June and an exact date to be confirmed, however following successful feedback the aim is that all future council meetings will be held via Skype.

Meeting Closed.