

NRCPD | Practitioners' Forum

Meeting 30 September 2014 | Minutes

Present

- Gail Dixon (ASLI)
- Jayne Oakes (Interpreters for deafblind people)
- Jean Gough (AVSTTR)
- Natasha Charles (ANP)
- Tracey Pycroft (ALS)

In attendance

- Jim Edwards (NRCPD)
- Dan Sumners (NRCPD) (minutes)

Apologies

- Alan Haythornthwaite (VLP)

Minutes of 10 June 2014 meeting

1. The notes of the 10 June meeting had been approved by email. There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Board decision on strengthening registration

2. At its July meeting, the NRCPD Board reaffirmed its short term aim of meeting the standards expected of a regulator. It was judging NRCPD against objective criteria in preparation for the next stage.
3. The Board's long term aim remained the same: statutory regulation. How long that would take was not clear.
4. Accreditation by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) was not currently being sought. But the criteria against which NRCPD was judging itself were based on the

Standards for Accreditation used by the PSA. However, NRCPD was looking at the standards either expected by or adhered to by a mix of regulators and other organisations. This was to make sure the criteria were the right ones for NRCPD.

5. The focus was currently on
 - a. reciprocity: recognising other registers, such as the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI);
 - b. updating policies: in particular the code of conduct, complaints process and practice breaks policy; and
 - c. reviewing governance arrangements: in particular the composition of the Board and the relationship with Signature.
6. The composition of the Board would be changed to four registrants, four non-registrants and a non-registrant chair. NRCPD had recruited an external consultant to manage the recruitment of the four registrants. The posts would be advertised soon. Interviews would be held towards the end of November and they would take up their positions by January 2015.
7. Members asked if the external consultant was aware of the existence of the professional associations and the political realities of the profession. The consultant had been briefed, but Board members would be recruited for their skills and experience. Board members were not representatives, their role was to help NRCPD achieve its objectives.

CPD next steps

8. The NRCPD Board had frozen the CPD requirement at 24 hours. At least 12 of those hours had to be structured activity, such as training courses, conferences and AGMs. The rest could be unstructured, such as meetings, reflective work and reading relevant material.
9. The Board had also decided to pilot a policy based on reflective practice in 2016. This would shift the focus from outputs (number of hours) to outcomes (how your practice developed as a result of what you did). Members of the Board would begin the process

by developing a CPD session. Participants would reflect on the reflective model and make some recommendations.

10. NRCPD would be making more and better guidance about acceptable CPD activity available by the end of November. It would include examples. Members were asked to submit suggestions.

Code of conduct and complaint process consultations

11. NRCPD was preparing consultations on a new code of conduct and complaint process. They would be launched the week commencing 6 October.
12. NRCPD planned to consult for four weeks. Members felt six weeks was more appropriate to allow organisations to collate a response.

Code of conduct

13. The code of conduct consultation would be aimed at registrants, unregistered communication professionals, and individual and organisational service users. The code itself would be published and questions asked.
14. The consultation would ask all respondents about new requirements on a registrant to
 - a. take action if they were concerned about the wellbeing of a service user; and
 - b. be open and honest about mistakes.
15. It was standard regulatory practice to require registrants to take action to safeguard a service user, even if it breached confidentiality. A registrant would need to make a judgement in a given situation about the need to break confidentiality.
16. The consultation would ask communication professionals about the removal of the additional guidelines for specific professions.
 - a. The aim was to have a single set of principles based on values that all communication professionals could agree to.
 - b. NRCPD suggested additional guidelines, perhaps in the form of a code of ethics, were a matter for the professions themselves.

- c. There was no association for deafblind people. If professionals thought this would cause a problem they should say so in their response to the consultation.

17. The consultation would also ask communication professionals if

- a. they would be able to abide by the code; and
- b. it would make them more or less likely to register.

18. The consultation would also ask service users if the code would

- a. make them feel safer;
- b. make them feel more confident;
- c. improve the service they receive; and
- d. encourage them to only use registered communication professionals.

Complaint process

19. The complaint process consultation would be aimed at potential complainants and registrants. The policy itself would not be published. A handbook and factsheets would be published and questions asked. The consultation would ask all respondents if they thought the guidance was helpful.

20. The main changes to the process were

- a. NRCPD would present the complaint;
- b. the committee would meet in public;
- c. a complaint could be made within six months of the event, rather than a month; and
- d. the introduction of a mediation stage.

21. A complaint could be made longer than six months after the event in exceptional circumstances. This was because harm, and therefore the misconduct, might not become apparent until a long time after.

22. The consultation would ask potential complainants if

- a. the changes would make them more or less likely to make a complaint; and

- b. we should be doing anything to encourage complaints

23. The consultation would ask registrants if

- a. the changes would make them more or less confident in the process; and
- b. they thought it was fair.

24. Members asked why NRCPD did not have an associated compliments process. Whilst celebration was not necessarily the role of a regulator, NRCPD did want the profession to be appropriately recognised. It was agreed celebration would be discussed with the professional associations.

25. Members asked if the policy said how long a complaint would take. Where possible the policy stated how many days it would take for something to happen. That information was included in the complaints process factsheet. But it was not possible to define a timescale for all elements of the process. The person who made the complaint and the registrant would be kept up-to-date with progress throughout the process.

26. Members asked if registrants would be suspended when a complaint was made about them. In some cases immediate suspension without prejudice would be required. But it would depend on the complaint.

Practice breaks policy (for comment)

27. At the last meeting, the Practitioners' Forum was asked for feedback on the draft returning to practice policy. Since then, the policy had been reviewed.

28. The policy was inconsistent and unclear in some places. It had been redrafted as a practice breaks policy (Appendix 1).

29. The main focus was to have a single policy that clearly applied to anyone who wanted to register after a break from practice. It applied whether someone was previously registered with NRCPD or not.

30. Members were asked to comment on the draft policy. There would not be a public consultation as it was an operational policy.

31. Registration requirements after a break from practice included an assessment by a deaf service user and an A1 assessor in the same professional category (or suitably experienced communication professional in the case of STTRs, lipspeakers and notetakers).

- a. A suitably experienced communication professional would also be appropriate in the case of interpreters for deafblind people.
- b. Members asked who decided who counted as 'suitably qualified'. NRCPD would decide in consultation with its professional standards advisers.

32. The policy would be circulated by email for final agreement.

Any other business

Deaf relay interpreting

33. Deaf relay interpreters were currently not regulated.

- a. National occupational standards (NOS) were required before a profession could be regulated.
- b. NRCPD had talked to an employer and a deaf led organisation about developing national occupational standards for deaf relay interpreters.

University of Wolverhampton BA (Hons) Interpreting (BSL/English)

34. ASLI was concerned about the University of Wolverhampton BA (Hons) Interpreting (BSL/English) being acceptable for registration. It could be perceived as a relaxation of standards as it was not a postgraduate qualification.

- a. The qualification had been mapped against the NOS and found to meet them.
- b. It had been ten years since the NOS were developed. They could be reviewed if employers felt they were no longer fit for purpose.

Website

35. The website lists of qualifications acceptable for registration with NRCPD needed to be updated. Members would send information they thought should be included to Dan Sumners.

Routes to registration

36. Mapping of the OCN Level 3 Notetaking for disabled people against the CACDP Level 3 notetaking qualification was being managed by the Qualifications and Quality Manager. Jim Edwards had names of consultants who could do the work. He would check with Natasha Charles these were the names she had suggested.

37. The new Signature qualification for lipspeakers would be available by the end of October.

38. The new Signature qualification for interpreters for deafblind people was almost complete.

Registration manager

39. NRCPD was in the process of recruiting a new registration manager. After two rounds of applications a suitable candidate had not been identified. NRCPD hoped to find someone by the end of 2014.

Endorsement of trainee sign language interpreters

40. Guidance on who could endorse a trainee sign language interpreter would be published by the end of October.

Date and time of next meeting

41. The next meeting would be in January. Members would be contacted about a date and time.

Action points

42. **Members** to send suggestions for CPD activities to Dan Sumners.
43. **NRCPD** to consult on the code of conduct and complaints process for six weeks.
44. **NRCPD** to begin a discussion with the professional associations about celebration of the profession.
45. **Dan Sumners** to circulate the final draft of the practice breaks policy for agreement.
46. **Members** to send information about qualifications they thought should be listed on the website to Dan Sumners.
47. **Jim Edwards** to make sure the names of the consultants he had that could map the OCN Level 3 Notetaking for disabled people against the old CACDP Level 3 notetaking qualification were those suggested by Natasha Charles.

Appendix 1 | Draft practice breaks policy

1. In this document
 - a. 'we' refers to NRCPD;
 - b. 'you' refers to a communication professional who is not practising;
 - c. 'communication professional' includes sign language interpreters, sign language translators, speech to text reporters, lipspeakers, interpreters for deafblind people and notetakers; and
 - d. 'practice break' or 'break' means a period of time in which a communication professional is not being paid for providing professional communication services.

Purpose

2. This policy is for communication professionals who
 - a. have taken a break from practising and intend to start practising again;
 - b. are not registered with NRCPD; and
 - c. want to apply for registration.
3. It might also be useful for communication professionals who are
 - a. registered with NRCPD but have not been practising;
 - b. considering a break in practice and thinking about what it might mean in the future; or
 - c. considering supervising or employing someone who is returning to practice.

Taking a break from practice for less than a year

4. You can take a break from practising but stay on the register if
 - a. your break is less than one year;
 - b. you have paid the annual registration fee; and
 - c. you meet the annual CPD requirement.
5. Please tell us if you are prevented from practising due to illness, injury, maternity, bereavement or some other event. We will reduce your CPD requirement if

- a. you provide evidence for your inability to work; and
 - b. the duration of the inability to work is not less than one month.
6. You are responsible for making sure you are fit to practise after your break.

Taking a break from practice for more than one year

7. You will be classed as taking a break from practice if
- a. you take a break from practice for more than one year; or
 - b. you take a break from practice for less than a year but are unable to meet the CPD requirement.
8. If you are already registered with NRCPD and take a break from practice you will be removed from the register. You should notify us of your break as soon as possible, using the practice break notification form.
9. After your break from practice NRCPD needs to be confident your knowledge and skills are at the appropriate level before registering you. The length of your break determines what you need to do in addition to the usual registration requirements.

Registration requirements after a one to two year break from practice

10. A CPD profile of 24 hours of activity.
11. An assessment by a deaf service user and an A1 assessor in the same professional category (or suitably experienced communication professional in the case of STTRs, lipspeakers and notetakers).
12. Refreshing deaf awareness training and assessment may also be required.

Registration requirements after a two to five year break from practice

13. A CPD profile of 24 hours of activity that has been developed with, monitored by and verified by an experienced NRCPD-registered communication professional.
14. An assessment by a deaf service user and an A1 assessor in the same professional category (or suitably experienced communication professional in the case of STTRs, lipspeakers and notetakers).

15. Refreshing deaf awareness training and assessment may also be required.

Registration requirements after a break from practice of more than five years

16. A CPD profile of 48 hours of activity that has been developed with, monitored by and verified by an experienced NRCPD-registered communication professional.

17. An assessment by a deaf service user and an A1 assessor in the same professional category (or suitably experienced communication professional in the case of STTRs, lipspeakers and notetakers).

18. Refreshing deaf awareness training and assessment may also be required.

Continuing professional development

19. The CPD requirement must be fulfilled within the twelve months before you apply for registration.

20. Your CPD activity can include both structured and unstructured activity.

- a. At least half of the requirement must be structured activity.
- b. Supervision and mentoring must make up no more than half the unstructured requirement.

21. If you have been using your skills during your absence you can use that activity to complete your CPD profile. It might include

- a. a research or teaching position related to your profession; or
- b. remaining active by volunteering, outreach or consultancy work.

22. After more than two years out of practice, your CPD profile must be developed with, monitored by and verified by an experienced NRCPD-registered communication professional. They must have suitable additional qualifications e.g. supervisor, mentor, assessor, verifier. Or they should be a suitably experienced communication professional in the categories where such qualifications are not available, ie STTRs, lipspeakers, notetakers.

23. Full guidance on developing a CPD profile can be found in the CPD handbook on the NRCPD website.