

NRCPD Practitioners' Forum

Zoom call at 12.00 14 May 2020 - Minutes

Present

- Andy Carmichael ASLI
- Emily Quigley ASLI
- Chance Walton-Ashmore VLP
- Beverley Roberts ALS
- Phil Rees ALS
- Eileen Bainbridge ANP
- Jean Gough AVSTTR

In attendance

- Kate Price NRCPD
- Marcus Hawthorn NRCPD

Apologies

- Jayne Oakes
- BIVR
- ALAS

Minutes of 05 December 2019 meeting – Matters arising

Mapping of the OCN level 3 Notetaking course would be delayed, some development work has been deferred to a later date due to Covid-19, as we have adjusted our activity schedule as a prudent measure. EB commented that mapping this course could be a 'win win' situation for NRCPD and notetakers as it could increase the number of registered Note takers.

Full independence from CACDP was achieved as planned and NRCPD staff moved to a new office in February 2020, although currently all staff are working from home.

DSA QUAG – contact had been made but we have not yet had the opportunity for a meeting, this will be scheduled later in the year.

Framework agreements & public bodies – All the meetings of NRCPD with the public bodies i.e. the Ministry of Justice, the Crown Commercial Service and the Police were attended as planned. The Police framework is new and will be ready later this year. The main areas we had input were using registered professionals, ensuring professionals are paid in a timely manner and professionals having prior knowledge of assignments so they can properly prepare.

The forum are concerned that the professional associations are not involved with the frameworks, there are concerns from the professions that frameworks are worked up with no input from the professionals who carry out the work. It would possibly be unwieldy for all associations to be involved, but the professions should be involved in some way. Unfortunately there is no mechanism in the current system for them to be involved. However, the forum agreed it is valuable that NRCPD has been and remains involved and this goes some way to including the perspective of the professions. Feedback from Sign Language Interpreters is that frameworks do not work for deaf people or interpreters, there is no engagement with the service users and they have no input into the frameworks which is an issue. NRCPD acknowledged this for future meetings.

Covid-19 Measures

From 1 April NRCPD implemented a set of temporary measures around registration, CPD and payment of fees to help support registrants and trainees during the pandemic. The measures had to be decided upon and implemented in a very short space of time. The measures were discussed with some of the professional associations and feedback from registrants was taken into account. The temporary measures are:

- Option to renew for 6 months and therefore only paying 50% of the usual fee.
- Extension of payment terms from 30 to 60 days.

- Every registrant will automatically receive 1 structured CPD per month from May until further notice.
- For those experiencing financial hardship, we encourage them to get in touch to discuss a more tailored approach to paying their invoice.

Free periods of registration will not be offered because we need to be fair to all registrants and sustain the registers: it would be unfair to only give free months to those people with renewals due during the pandemic. The Board will continue to keep the measures under review and would meet sooner than scheduled if necessary. If registrants provide reasoned and constructive feedback on the measures we will give the feedback to the Board to consider.

Very few people opted for the 6 month renewal at first, however we have noticed more people are choosing this now (18 to date from 250+ renewals since the measures brought in).

The forum suggested that the measures are published again, and suggested in BSL as well as English, particularly the option to contact NRCPD to confidentially discuss individual circumstances. This was republished on the website on 21 May.

Forum members commented on the availability of work. For interpreters, at the beginning of lockdown bookings swiftly reduced, however things have started to level off and members aren't as worried as before. For lipspeakers work is very limited and some are considering leaving the profession. ALS are keen for people not to leave the profession or the register and will encourage those people to get in touch to discuss their registration options.

For NRCPD, overall registration figures are stable although down very slightly mainly because of the uncertainty for trainees. For the same reason we have not seen our usual Spring growth in numbers.

Complaints Process Review

The complaints process review is underway, we have received and analysed the feedback from the professional associations and are organising the material into packages of work for next steps.

Timescales for concluding complaints and providing updates to people involved in complaints – There are sometimes delays in the progress of the investigations into complaints. This is often unavoidable, but it can leave people involved wondering what is happening. We can and we have reduced delays however we have to balance that with giving people an appropriate amount of time to respond to statements and evidence at the various stages. It is important that we keep people updated on the current position and we will continue to improve this.

We do receive complaints that are about registrants which do not stem from their practise as a registered professional. Our Code of Conduct is focused on breaches arising from practise only which is quite unusual for a regulator. We are intending to remove that limitation so we can investigate complaints that are related to someone's identity as a professional but do not necessarily stem from practise. This would align us with other regulators - we still need to communicate this, and the other changes of course, as it extends our scope. We may be able to do this by making some small changes to the preamble to the Code. However if this is not possible it will become a more involved piece of work under the complaints process review.

Other issues we are considering as part of the review are changing the policy so that NRCPD has the power to bring a complaint against someone e.g. if we receive a complaint but the complainant does not wish to pursue it formally. There is also the question if we have the levels of complaint dealing right so that issues are dealt with at the lowest level consistent with its severity. E.g. should we introduce a step where the registrar could make a decision based on the recommendation of Case Examiners outside of the complaints committee? There are many possible variations of this and each have legal implications for which we would need specialist advice.

CPD Review

The updated CPD policy will be implemented in November and registrants have been informed. We will remind registrants regularly that the changes are coming so they can plan accordingly. We are writing a new handbook and that will be published at the end of the summer.

Communications & Engagement

The planned outreach events for 2020 have been cancelled due to Covid-19, however we will attend online events such as webinars with professional associations. Communications with registrants and other stakeholders by email and social media carry on as normal, and we have been involved with recent social media campaigns e.g. #WhereIsTheInterpreter.

NRCPD Strategy

We are coming to the end of our current strategy, and developing our new one. We want to give the professional associations the opportunity to have some input into future strategy, we want to hear your views on this. This would be between the Chairs of the professional associations and the Chair and/or Director of NRCPD.

Points Raised by Members

All points raised by members prior to the meeting have already been answered outside the meeting.

Signed

Kate Price

Registration Services Manager

NRCPD