

Accredited Registers

Condition Review: Associations of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC)

Date: 10 February 2025

1. Outcome

- 1.1 At the Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC)'s accreditation renewal, the Professional Standards Authority ('we') issued four Conditions on its accreditation, all of which were to be completed by January 2025 (see page 4 of the published outcome)¹.
- 1.2 This report sets out our assessment of the actions taken by the ACC to satisfy the Conditions.
- 1.3 We found that the ACC have met Conditions One, Two, Three and Four.

2. Background

- 2.1 We assess registers against our *Standards for Accredited Registers* ('the Standards')². Where a Register has not met a Standard, we can issue Conditions. A Condition sets out the requirements and the timeframe that a Register must meet.
- 2.2 At the ACC's accreditation renewal, completed in June 2024, we issued four Conditions (a full list is published on the ACC's directory page³. All Conditions had to be implemented by January 2025:

Condition One:

The ACC must review their Appeals Process in relation to registration decisions, to ensure that it covers all grounds for appeal.

Condition Two:

The ACC must publish clear information to distinguish the difference between the directory and the accredited register.

Condition Three:

The ACC must update policy C1 to include direction regarding EDI training for the Disciplinary Panel should it be necessary.

Condition Four:

The ACC must publish a clear description of the limitations and benefits of treatment offered by registrants.

¹<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Accreditation%20renewal%20report%20-%20Standards%201-8%20Association%20of%20Christians%20in%20Counselling%20and%20Linked%20Professions%20%28ACC%29%20October%202024.pdf>

²<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/publications/standards-accredited-registers>

³ <https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/organisations-we-oversee/find-a-register/association-christians-counselling-and-linked-professions>

- 2.3 This report discusses the actions the ACC took to address the Conditions, as well as our decision about whether the Condition is met.
- 2.4 We reviewed the following evidence:
 - a) ACC's reported actions about what it had done to meet Conditions One, Two, Three and Four.

3. Concerns leading to the Conditions

Condition One:

- 3.1 In reviewing the ACC's registration process, we identified that the ACC did not have a clear appeals process relating to registration decisions, which is one of our minimum requirements. The ACC directed us to review their Safeguarding and Restoration Policy, and also their Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ) page, specifically '[what will happen if I don't meet the standards of registered membership](#)'. Further, the ACC advised us they had not yet had a register appeal. While we acknowledged this information, we noted our minimum requirements require a clear appeals process is in place, in relation to registration decisions. In the absence of this policy, the Accreditation Panel did not consider requirement to have been met and therefore imposed Condition One.

Condition Two:

- 3.2 In review of the ACC's website, we identified some concerns regarding the potential for confusion between the ACC's Accredited Register and their 'Find a Counsellor' directory tool. While the Accreditation Panel recognised there was value in both the directory and the Accredited Register, they also considered that the ACC needed to more clearly highlight the differences between the two. The Accreditation Panel felt that it would not be clear to a lay person who was engaging with the ACC's website what the difference was between the 'ACC Register' and the 'Find a Counsellor' directory tool. The Accreditation Panel felt it was necessary for the ACC to remediate this, by way of providing an explanation to help distinguish between the two, and Condition Two was imposed.

Condition Three:

- 3.3 As part of our minimum requirements for Accreditation, registers must demonstrate their processes for recruitment, training, and ongoing monitoring of those key decision makers in disciplinary processes; this is inclusive of relevant EDI Training. To demonstrate their compliance with this requirement, the ACC directed us to their role specifications for their Complaint Investigator (A1), Pre-Hearing Assessment Panel Member (B1), Disciplinary Hearing Panel Member (C1) and Appeals Hearing Panel Member (D1). The Accreditation Panel reviewed these documents and found that the ACC considered equality, diversion and inclusion (EDI) in A1, B1 and D1, however, could not find any evidence of this in relation to the Disciplinary Hearing Panel Member (C1). Given this is one of our minimum requirements, the Accreditation Panel imposed Condition Three.

Condition Four:

- 3.4 As part of our minimum requirements for Accreditation, registers must provide clear and accessible information about the limitations and benefits of treatments offered by registrants. In response to this requirement, the ACC directed us to their ‘information for members of the public on counselling’ [webpage](#), and FAQ for prospective clients page, linked [here](#). In review of these links, and in conjunction with our own research, we were unable to identify any areas where the ACC listed the limitations of treatment offered by registrants. As such, the Accreditation Panel issued Condition Four.
- 3.5 Further details can be found under Standards Two, Five and Seven of the ACC’s accreditation renewal⁴.

4. Assessment of Condition One

- 4.1 The ACC provided its response to Condition One on 3 January 2025.
- 4.2 The ACC reported they created a Register Appeals Process⁵ which they have published on both their ‘Registered Memberships FAQ’⁶ and ‘How to make a complaint’⁷ pages.
- 4.3 Importantly, the policy sets out all relevant factors for consideration of an appeal. It outlines the grounds for appeal, process for submitting an appeal, expected timeframes, and limitations of the policy. In conducting our assessment of this process, we are satisfied that the ACC have provided information and guidance on a range of relevant areas.
- 4.4 We are satisfied with the actions taken by the ACC to meet this condition, and given an appeal route for registration decisions has been documented and published, we are satisfied the condition has been met.

5. Assessment of Condition Two

- 5.1 The ACC provided its response to Condition Two on 3 January 2025.
- 5.2 The ACC told us they updated their website⁸ to make it easier to distinguish between their directory and their register. The ACC updated the wording to more clearly explain what the difference is between the Accredited Register and the ‘Find a Counsellor’ Directory Tool. We also wrote to the ACC to ask them to make further changes to the formatting, for readability, and the ACC updated their website accordingly.
- 5.3 These updates mean it is now clearer that those who are on the directory, are a part of the Accredited Register. Some members may decide not to be on the directory (for example, due to capacity issues), however, all those registered with the ACC have to be on the Accredited Register.

⁴ See Footnote 1.

⁵ [ACC-Register-Appeals-Process.pdf](#)

⁶ [Registered membership FAQs - ACC UK](#)

⁷ [How to make a complaint - ACC UK](#)

⁸ [Find a counsellor - ACC UK](#)

- 5.4 Given the updates the ACC have made to their website to differentiate between the directory and the register, we are satisfied that this condition is now met.

6. Assessment of Condition Three.

- 6.1 The ACC provided its response to Condition Three on 3 January 2025.
- 6.2 The ACC advised us that they had updated policy C1 to be inclusive of relevant EDI Training. This states that *“the Panel Member will be provided with and be required to read ACC’s EDIs policy and to complete ACC’s training on EDI prior to reading papers and attending any hearings.”*
- 6.3 Furthermore, the ACC also told us they felt it was important that this change should be part of the appointments process for all those involved in processing complaints, and so have added this action to the appointment process for all panel members of the complaints process. We were provided with these policies (A1, B1, C1, and D1) where we evidenced this update.
- 6.4 The ACC also told us they have commissioned a training video for ACC panel members which will focus on EDI and other biases relevant to the counselling profession. This training will be available to ACC assessors, Board members and staff, and will be delivered in February 2025.
- 6.5 Given the evidence that was submitted, we consider Condition Three met.

7. Assessment of Condition Four.

- 7.1 The ACC provided its response to Condition Four on 3 January 2025.
- 7.2 The ACC reported they created a webpage titled ‘what are the recognised benefits and limitations of counselling and psychotherapy⁹’ which can be found under the ‘how counselling can help¹⁰’ page.
- 7.3 In review of these webpages, we are satisfied with the information the ACC have published, and in fact consider this to be a well-rounded outline of the benefits and limitations of counselling and psychotherapy. We consider this webpage will enable prospective service users to make informed choices about seeking services and undergoing treatment with an ACC registrant. In conjunction with the above information, the ACC also told us they are planning to publish a blog on their website in the first quarter of 2025, which highlights the benefits of holding an Accredited Register for Christians in counselling and psychotherapy.
- 7.4 The limitations which the ACC have highlighted also help to identify what behaviours should and should not be expected from a counsellor and/or psychotherapist. For example, the ACC has listed ‘ethical and professional boundaries’ as a potential limitation, highlighting that it is important for a counsellor/therapist to maintain appropriate boundaries, and so sets the tone of expected behaviours from their registrants.

⁹ [What are the recognised benefits and limitations of counselling and psychotherapy? - ACC UK](#)

¹⁰ [How can counselling help - ACC UK](#)

7.5 In light of the above new information published on the ACC website, we consider this condition met.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The ACC have provided clear evidence of adherence to the requirements of the conditions.

8.2 As a result, we therefore found that Conditions One, Two, Three and Four have been met.