

Accreditation renewal report

Standards 1-8

Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC)

October 2024

Contents

About accreditation.....	3
The Outcome.....	4
About the Register.....	5
Assessment against the Standards	8
Share your experience	15
Impact assessment (including Equalities impact)	15

About accreditation

The Professional Standards Authority (the Authority) accredits registers of people working in a variety of health and social care occupations that are not regulated by law. To become an Accredited Register, organisations holding registers of unregulated health and social care roles must prove that they meet our *Standards for Accredited Registers* (the Standards).

Initial accreditation decisions and Full Renewal decisions are made by an Accreditation Panel following an assessment of the organisation against the Standards by the Accreditation team. The Panel decides whether to accredit or continue to accredit an organisation or not. The Panel can also decide to accredit with Conditions and provide Recommendations to the organisation.

- **Condition** – Issued when a Panel has determined that a Standard has not been met. A Condition sets out the requirements needed for the Accredited Register to meet the Standards, within a set timeframe. It may also reduce the period of accreditation subject to a review or the Condition being met.
- **Recommendation** – Actions that would improve practice and benefit the operation of the Register, but which is not a current requirement for accreditation to be maintained.

This assessment was carried out against our Standards for Accredited Registers¹ (“the Standards”) and our minimum requirements for the Standards as set out in our Evidence framework². More about how we assess against Standard One can be found in our Supplementary Guidance for Standard One³.

We used the following in our assessment of the ACC:

- Documentary review of evidence of benefits and risk supplied by the ACC and gathered through desk research
- Documentary review of evidence supplied by the ACC and gathered from public sources such as its website
- Due diligence checks
- Share your experience responses
- Assessment of ACC’s complaints procedures.

¹ https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/standards/standards-for-accredited-registers.pdf?sfvrsn=e2577e20_8

² https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/accredited-registers/standards-for-accredited-registers/accredited-registers-evidence-framework-for-standards.pdf?sfvrsn=55f4920_9

³ https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/accredited-registers/standards-for-accredited-registers/accredited-registers-supplementary-guidance-for-standard-one.pdf?sfvrsn=3e5f4920_6

The Outcome

The Accreditation Panel met on 26 June 2024 to consider the Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC). The Panel was satisfied that the ACC could meet with Conditions all the Standards for Accredited Registers.

We therefore decided to accredited the ACC with Conditions.

We noted the following **positive findings**:

- The ACC’s complaints procedures have been updated and are comprehensive and transparent.
- The ACC has launched their website which is easy to navigate and user-friendly.
- The ACC ensure that all important documents are accessible from the website at all times, by ensuring these stay in the footer of all pages.
- The ACC clearly publishes information to registrants regarding managing the risk of suicide, in line with the NICE Guideline NG225.

We issued the following Conditions to be implemented by the deadline given:

Conditions		Deadline
Standard Two	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ACC must review their Appeals Process in relation to registration decisions to ensure that it covers all grounds for appeal. 2. The ACC must publish clear information to distinguish the difference between the directory and the accredited register. 	January 2025
Standard Five	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The ACC must update policy C1 to include direction regarding EDI training for the Disciplinary Panel should it be necessary. 	January 2025
Standard Seven	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The ACC must publish a clear description of the limitations and benefits of treatment offered by registrants. 	January 2025

We issued the following Recommendations to be considered by the next review:

Recommendations	
Standard Six	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ACC should keep us updated on the progress of the development of their Articles of Association.
Standard Eight	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The ACC should update their Terms and Conditions of Membership to clearly stipulate that the Quality Mark (QM) is not to be used outside of the United Kingdom (UK). We acknowledge they currently provide information to their registrants stating the AM is not to be used overseas, however, for the avoidance of doubt and transparency, consider it appropriate for this to clearly state outside of the UK.

About the Register

This section provides an overview of the ACC and its register.

Name of Organisation	Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions
Website	Home - ACC UK (acc-uk.org)
Type of Organisation	The Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions (ACC) is a Christian professional membership organisation for those involved in counselling/psychotherapy and linked professions, i.e. pastoral care, coaching and spiritual direction, in the UK. They offer professional support and resources to its members, and is committed to promoting safe and ethical practice.
Role(s) covered	Counsellor, Supervisor, Counselling Organisations and linked professions, i.e. pastoral care, coaching and spiritual direction.
Number of registrants	953 (as of 1 January 2024)
Overview of Governance	The ACC is a registered charity 1018559 and a company limited by guarantee (2791541). The ACC is made up of a Board of nine trustees and an independent Register Advisory Panel (RAP) 'who hold ACC to account to show that the standards for entry to the Register are upheld including the maintenance of the register and how it deals with receiving and investigating complaints through its professional complaints procedure.'
Overview of the aims of the register	<p>The ACC advises their purpose is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safe, competent, ethical and accountable practice for counselling and linked professions • To resource individuals and communities for quality relationships, restoration and healing • To encourage exploration of psychological and theological insights into wellbeing and growth. • To empower individuals through connecting people with safe professionals, and colleagues with shared professions and faith. • Support students in training and professionals in their development, and in their life events through prayer. • Provide guidance and training for safe, competent, ethical and accountable practice in counselling and linked professions and encourage exploration of and research on psychological and theological insights into wellbeing and growth. • Work with other professional bodies, stakeholders and churches as we believe that we work better together.

Inherent risks of the practice

This section uses the criteria developed as part of the Authority's *Right Touch Assurance tool*⁴ to give an overview of the work of counsellors or psychotherapists.

Risk criteria	Counsellors or psychotherapists
<p>1. Scale of risk associated with Counsellors or psychotherapists.</p> <p><i>a. What do Counsellors or psychotherapists do?</i></p> <p><i>b. How many Counsellors or psychotherapists are there?</i></p> <p><i>c. Where do Counsellors or psychotherapists work?</i></p> <p><i>d. Size of actual/potential service user group</i></p>	<p>a. In 1992, The Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC) was set up as a professional membership body for counsellors to establish standards for education and practise and a code of ethics for Christians in counselling. ACC is a mainstream' counselling register distinguished because their registrants self-identify as Christians, and this is significant for themselves, their clients, and the wider profession in relation to raising awareness of the value of safe integration of faith and spirituality into counselling practise for the benefit of clients. Religious faith and spirituality have historically been marginalised experiences for clients in counselling, psychotherapy, and related fields. ACC counsellors, psychotherapists, and affiliated organisations work with people of all faiths within ACC's Ethics and Practise.</p> <p>b. As of January 18, 2022, there were 891 registrants on the register.</p> <p>c. The ACC reported that its registrants work in the NHS, private clinics, schools, EAP services, churches, and community settings. Local Authority services are indicated as 'unsure'.</p> <p>d. The ACC estimates that each registrant sees, on average, 25 clients per week.</p>
<p>2. Means of assurance</p>	<p>The means of assurance will depend on the practise setting. For managed premises such as NHS settings and schools, there will be criminal records and other pre-employment checks required. Those who are self-employed and offer services on private premises may choose to register with a body such as the ACC, but they do not have to.</p>
<p>3. About the sector in which ACC operate</p>	<p><i>ACC counsellors work with people of all faiths and in many different settings including schools and universities, the NHS and in general and specialised counselling services.</i></p> <p>Mental health provision within the NHS is generally provided across three main settings: care in the community, inpatient care, and secure care. Services can broadly be categorised as adult services, children and young people's services, urgent</p>

⁴ https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/policy-advice/right-touch-assurance---a-methodology-for-assessing-and-assuring-occupational-risk-of-harm91c118f761926971a151ff000072e7a6.pdf?sfvrsn=f537120_14.

	<p>and crisis care, and forensic services⁵. Although there are differences in the four UK models, these categorisations tend to broadly apply across all.</p> <p>A significant number of people access mental health and wellbeing support from private practitioners. In some cases, this may be due to long waiting lists for talking therapies on the NHS, or to access treatment that isn't available through the NHS. People can access private providers through a referral from an NHS GP, or by searching for one themselves⁶.</p> <p>Many primary and secondary schools provide access to professional counselling support. Some charities also provide access to specific groups, such as to veterans or refugees.</p>
<p>4. Risk perception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Need for public confidence in Counsellor or psychotherapist?</i> · <i>Need for assurance for employers or other stakeholders?</i> 	<p>As many registrants are likely to be self-employed, it is important that members of the public have confidence in the practitioners they choose to deliver therapy. The specific approach of ACC, which may not always be available as part of mainstream NHS services, make it important that the public are aware of what to expect from practitioners. Since registrants may be working with children and/or vulnerable adults, it is important that the public can have confidence there are appropriate safeguards in place.</p>

⁵ [The state of the NHS provider sector](#)

⁶ [Private sector mental health support - Mind](#)

Assessment against the Standards

Standard One: Eligibility and 'public interest test'

Summary

- 1.1 The Accreditation Panel found it is in the public interest to accredit the ACC. The Accreditation Panel found that Standard One is met.

Accreditation Panel findings

- 1.2 We completed our Standard One assessment for the ACC in October 2023. We found that the ACC's register falls within the scope of the Accredited Registers Programme. We considered that the work of counsellors and psychotherapists can be beneficial. We found it is in the public interest to have registers of practitioners who meet appropriate standards of competence, conduct and business practice, as required by the ACC.
- 1.3 Consequently, the Accreditation Team found that Standard One was met. We did not identify any new information that could affect Standard One being met, during the assessment of Standards Two to Eight.

Standard 2: Management of the register

Summary

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Two was met. It issued the following Conditions:

- The ACC must develop a clear appeals process in relation to registration decisions and should publish this on their website.
- The ACC must publish clear information to distinguish the difference between the directory and the accredited register.

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC's website clearly sets out requirements for registrants on their [memberships webpage](#). To join the register, prospective registrants need to have successfully completed (at a minimum) a level 4 diploma qualification or the equivalent in counselling/psychotherapy which has validated by Ofqual, CCEA, SQA, Qualification Wales, or a UK higher educational establishment. The webpage also sets out required qualifications and highlights equivalence routes, which are further explored throughout this report.
- The ACC advised us there is a requirement for an applicant to be a Christian in the Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox tradition. The ACC also told us they were established as an organisation for counsellors who identified as Christians as set out in its Memorandum of Association and Charitable Objectives, and given this, there is a provision within the Equality Act 2010 to restrict membership with regard to faith. We reviewed the ACC's document titled 'Legal Basis for Discrimination: Christian Faith' and are satisfied the ACC have obtained appropriate legal advice for the basis on which they can restrict registration to people of certain faiths.
- In reviewing the ACC's registration process, we identified that the ACC does not have a clear appeals process relating to registration decisions. 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 have not yet had a register appeal. While we acknowledge this information, we note the minimum requirement requires a clear appeals process in relation to registration, and in the absence of this policy, do not consider this to have been met. As such, the accreditation panel issued the following **Condition**:

- **The ACC must review their Appeals Process in relation to registration decisions to ensure that it covers all grounds for appeal.**
- The ACC has sufficient mechanisms to ensure that applicants meet (and continue to meet) registration requirements. The ACC have provided us with an example of a registration form, in which applicants must fill out information pertaining to their training and educational details, qualifications and specialist areas. This form is processed by the administration team to ensure that the information provided meets the standards for registration.
- The ACC ensures continued practice competence through their CPD requirements. This includes that registrants must undertake at least 25-hours of CPD per year. The ACC confirm this at both application and annual renewal of registration.
- Additionally, the ACC are members of the AR Information Sharing Protocol, in which they will share information so as to support mutual recognition of outcomes of disciplinary proceedings from other accredited registers. Any restrictions on practice are clearly displayed on both a registrants register entry, and further, on their removals, suspensions and sanctions page.
- The Accreditation Panel found that the ACC publish a member’s full name, register number and location on their register entry. While they considered that this may not meet the minimum requirement, in that details of qualification required for registration are not included on each registrant’s profile, the Panel noted that the ACC does publish membership grade on each registrants profile. Furthermore, the ACC have [published this webpage](#) which sets out training and educational requirements required for registration (and is targeted towards members of the public) and have [published this webpage](#) which sets out details of requirements for prospective registrants (and is geared towards prospective registrants). The Panel therefore considered that the ACC does publish relevant and clear to understand information about educational requirements and qualifications required for registration. While the ACC may wish to consider adding qualifications held by registrants to the register, the information provided on the register allows individuals to cross reference the level of qualification that an individual registrant has obtained for their grade of membership.
- The Accreditation Panel also considered concerns regarding the potential confusion between the ACC’s Accredited Register in comparison with their ‘Find a Counsellor’ tool. While the Accreditation Panel recognised there was value in both the directory and the Accredited Register, they also considered that the ACC needs to clearly highlight the differences between these two

tools. The Accreditation Panel found that it would not be clear to a lay person who is engaging with the ACC's website what the difference is between the 'ACC register' and 'find a counsellor' tools on the website and consider it would be appropriate for the ACC to remediate this by way of providing explanation to distinguish between the two. As such, the following **Condition** was issued:

- **The ACC must publish clear information to distinguish the difference between the directory and the Accredited Register.**

Standard 3: Standards for registrants

Summary

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Three was met.

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC requires registrants to agree to their Terms and Conditions of Registration and Code of Ethics for registration.
- These documents cover areas such as continuing professional development (CPD) requirements, the [ACC's Ethics and Practice](#), the [Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy](#), the [Churchill Framework](#) as a guide to integrating religious faith and spirituality into counselling practice, and the [NICE Guideline NG225](#), specifically, to not use assessment tools to predict the risk of suicide. Also included in the Terms and Conditions of Registration, is the requirement for registrants to hold indemnity insurance.
- In line with our minimum requirements, we reviewed the ACC's requirements for advertising. Within the Terms and Conditions, we noted the ACC provides direction to registrants to ensure they are compliant with the [Advertising Standards Authority CAP Code](#) and do not mislead the public about their professional membership, training, skills and competence, nor make claims about the services they offer. This also applies to any publicly advertised adjunct therapies to which their profession as a counsellor may be seen to add legitimacy (for example, coaching or spiritual direction).
- The ACC's Scope of Practice for Professional Members directs that members must only practice in areas that they have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience in. It also provides direction to members to refer a service user or patient to another practitioner if at any point a member assesses the patient's needs as beyond their scope of practice.
- The ACC have adopted the [SCoPED framework](#) for working with adults, and the [Churchill Framework](#) for working with client's religion and spirituality. ACC also references the [BACP competency and curricula framework](#) when working with children and young people. These frameworks provide a minimum standard of competence.
- We require Accredited Registers to ensure that their registrants have procedures for considering complaints and escalating them to their registering body where necessary. Given most registrants will likely work in independent practice, we reviewed the ACC's Complaints Policy. We note this has clear requirements for registrants regarding the appropriate handling of complaints. We note that the ACC provide direction to their members to first attempt to resolve the issue with the client directly, however, if the client remains

dissatisfied, to refer them to the ACC's Complaints Policy and escalate it to the register.

Standard 4: Education and training

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Four was met.

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC does not accredit training courses, and instead, are reliant on awarding and accrediting bodies. They check curriculum for any course they have no prior knowledge of (for example, [CPCAB](#), [AIM](#), [QAA benchmark](#)).
- In January 2023, the ACC adopted the January 2022 version of the [SCoPED Framework](#). A Notification of Change is currently underway in relation to the ACC⁷.
- The Accreditation Panel noted on the "[Join ACC Register](#)" page, there is information under the Education & Training Requirements subheading which directs people to the [SCoPED competences \(column A\)](#). We considered that this page also provides information indicating that "*all eligible counselling/psychotherapy training will include a curriculum that equips and assesses students in the necessary knowledge and skills required to practice safely and ethically as a counsellor.*" Given the ACC have adopted the SCoPED framework, we consider their curricula to be in line with the National Occupational Skills requirements.
- We noted that in review of the SCoPED Framework, there is a number of core competencies which require registrants to adequately care for a diverse population of service users. We noted that the core competencies of the SCoPED framework also require registrants to have knowledge and understanding of the wider health and social care system. This includes that registrants understand their own scope of practice and refer to other health care professionals where necessary.
- We reviewed the ACC's criteria for Equivalence Decisions and are satisfied that the ACC clearly sets out how equivalence will be considered. The equivalence route also makes it clear that completion of equivalent qualifications does not automatically guarantee entry onto the ACC's register, and that there are further criteria association with registration (for example, requirement to be of Christian faith, be compliant with CPD requirements).
- Overall, the Accreditation Panel were satisfied that the ACC published clear information pertaining to education and training requirements for registration, including equivalence routes.

Standard 5: Complaints and concerns about registrations

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Five was met.

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC has a well-developed complaints policy which is clearly accessible from its website. The complaints policy sets out clear information advising how to raise a complaint, what the complaints process involves and associated timeframes with raising a complaint.

⁷ [240409-scoped-summary-of-proposed-changes.pdf \(professionalstandards.org.uk\)](#)

- The ACC advised us they did not receive any complaints within the last twelve months which reached the threshold of a breach of ethics. The ACC further explained that they did however receive concerns in the form of a client/ third party request for feedback. When we explored this further with the ACC, they advised us that these complaints were dealt with in an ‘informal manner’, given there was no information to suggest there was a breach of the Code of Ethics and Practice. The ACC told us they resolved the matter with the clients and registrant directly, and both parties were satisfied with this outcome. The ACC further explained that they can apply this ‘informal’ process to matters which do not reach the threshold for a formal complaints investigation. The Accreditation Panel did not identify any concerns with this approach.
- For complaints which do meet the formal threshold, an [independent investigation takes](#) place to gather all the information in one place and interview the parties and any other witnesses. The independent investigator’s report and evidence is presented to an independent pre-hearing assessment panel, including a lay person, who determine whether there is a case for professional misconduct/breach of ACC’s ethics. Where this is the case, a disciplinary panel will be convened. The disciplinary panel is an independent panel with lay representation. ACC present the case against the registrant to the panel. The panel may interview the registrant, and the complainant as (principal) witness. They will determine the outcome of the complaint and any sanction, referencing ACC’s indicative sanctions policy. The detailed notes of the meeting are reviewed by RAP to ensure that due process has taken place, and the outcome is fair and proportionate.
- The complaints procedure also details the appeals process for all parties.
- The ACC also publishes separate information as to how to make a complaint about the ACC, its Board or Committees and how to make a complaint against ACC Staff.
- The ACC directed us to their policies regarding the complaints process, including the process for each phase of the disciplinary process. We also reviewed role specifications relating to the disciplinary process (including the complaint investigator, pre-hearing assessment panel member, disciplinary hearing panel member, and appeals hearing panel member) and found information indicating that the ACC gives consideration to equality, diversion and inclusion (EDI). The Accreditation Panel did however notice that all role specifications, besides the disciplinary hearing panel member considered EDI, and as such, has issued the below condition:
 - It is appropriate for the ACC to update their disciplinary hearing panel member (C1) policy to include direction regarding EDI training for the Disciplinary Panel.
- The Accreditation Panel reviewed the ACC’s Indicative Sanctions Policy and were satisfied this policy was an appropriate mechanism for making sure disciplinary outcomes are consistent. The ACC also advised the consistency of outcomes is reviewed by the RAP. Members of the RAP are given redacted notes of the disciplinary panel meetings and have opportunity to make comment about how proceedings were conducted, and the outcome arrived at.

- We noted that the ACC are signatories to the AR Information Sharing Protocol⁸ and will ensure that other Accredited Registers are notified of disciplinary outcomes.
- Complaint outcomes are published in line with sections 5.8, 5.10 and 7 of the [Complaint Procedure](#). We noted evidence of this on the [removals, suspensions and sanctions page](#), which lists current disciplinary outcomes.

Standard 6: Governance

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Six was met.

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC is a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee, governed by its Board of Trustees who are responsible for the strategic governance and oversight of the company. The Board of Trustees ensure that the ACC carries out its purpose for providing public benefit, manages resources responsibly, and complies with its governing document, charity law requirements and other legal requirements that apply to the ACC.
- The ACC also set up a Register Advisory Panel (RAP) in 2014 to hold themselves to account in relation to how they maintain the standards required to hold an Accredited Register. The RAP is an independent panel of individuals with expertise in professional regulation, healthcare, legal matters, patient and consumer advocacy or with similar relevant knowledge and experience to oversee the governance, design, and management of the Accredited Register of counsellors held by the ACC under the Accredited Registers Programme.
- These boards and committees operate independently and ensure clear functional separation. Policies are in place to manage conflict of interests, with staff and committee members required to declare any personal interests on appointment and at annual review.
- Governance arrangements, including roles and responsibilities of Board members, minutes of recent meetings and role specifications are published on the ACC's website.
- The ACC will receive and investigate complaints against the actions of itself and its staff through its corporate procedures.
- We also reviewed the ACC's processes and procedures regarding recruitment and training and are satisfied that the ACC seeks to achieve diversity in the composition of its senior leadership, Board and Committee members. We reviewed the ACC's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Statement](#) and recognise that EDI is woven through all their work. The ACC also told us they consult with their Ethnic Tapestry Group when making recruitment decisions to ensure EDI is considered.

Standard 7: Management of the risks arising from the activities of registrants

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Seven was met. It issued the following Condition.

Condition:

⁸ [AR-information-sharing-protocol.pdf \(acc-uk.org\)](#)

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

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC manages the risks arising from the activities of registrants by maintaining a risk register relating to the activities of registrants, reporting to the Board and RAP themes and concerns that have arisen from complaints and identifying changes in requirements from external bodies (for example PSA, legislation).
- The ACC provided us with a copy of their risk register and advised this is reviewed on an annual basis.
- In review of this standard, we reviewed the ACC’s website to determine if they had published clear and accessible information about the limitations and benefits of treatments offered by roles registered by the ACC.
- 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 the below **Condition**:
 - **The ACC must publish a clear description of the limitations and benefits of treatment offered by registrants.**

Standard 8: Communications and engagement

The Accreditation Panel found that Standard Eight was met. It issued the following **Recommendation**:

Recommendation:

- **The ACC should update their Terms and Conditions of Membership to clearly stipulate that the Quality Mark (QM) is not to be used outside of the United Kingdom (UK). We acknowledge they currently provide information to their registrants stating the QM is not to be used overseas, however, for the avoidance of doubt and transparency, consider it appropriate for this to clearly state outside of the UK.**

Accreditation Panel findings

- The ACC launched a new website in March 2024, with the aim of improving accessibility. Our assessment found the new site offers clearer information, better accessibility features, and easier access to its complaints process.
- The ACC have published their key documents including [how to make a complaint](#), information about [registration](#) and a direct link to the [register](#) from the main page of the website. The ACC also have a ‘menu’ button on the top right corner of their front webpage which directs to professional support, professional training, join ACC, news & events, about ACC, resources and the ACC Register. We note some of these headings are available as stand-alone hyperlinks on the front page also (ACC register, about ACC and join ACC)

and consider this to be appropriate as they would likely be the most frequented areas of the website.

- Grades of membership and registration are clearly explained on the '[Join ACC](#)' page, where the ACC link to an explanation of each type of membership which sets out further details such as education and training requirements.
- We considered that the ACC make it clear in their Terms and Conditions of Membership that the Quality Mark (QM) is “not to be used for those who are overseas and working with overseas clients.” While we acknowledge the ACC have provided information regarding use of the QM, for the avoidance of doubt, we consider it is appropriate for the ACC to specifically state that the QM is not to be used outside of the United Kingdom. As such, the accreditation panel issued the below **Recommendation**:
 - **The ACC should update their Terms and Conditions of Membership to clearly stipulate the QM is not to be used outside of the United Kingdom (UK). We acknowledge they currently provide information to their registrants stating the AM is not to be used overseas, however, for the avoidance of doubt and transparency, consider it appropriate for this to clearly state outside of the UK.**

Share your experience

We received two responses to the invitation to share experience of the ACC.

One of these responses was previously considered via a Targeted Review⁹, which was completed in September 2023.

The other response was pertaining to Standard Five and related to the effective handling of a disciplinary procedure. The Accreditation Panel did not find any evidence that the ACC inappropriately managed this matter and were satisfied that the ACC had addressed issues of public protection and public safety.

Impact assessment (including Equalities impact)

We carried out an impact assessment as part of our decision to accredit the ACC. This impact assessment included an equalities impact assessment as part of the consideration of our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Impact Assessment found that there is no discernible impact on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation. However, there is a positive impact related to religion or belief as

⁹ [acc-targeted-review-panel-report.pdf \(professionalstandards.org.uk\)](#)

the ACC holds a register of counsellors who profess a religious faith for the benefit of clients who have a preference for a counsellor who has a religious faith. The Impact Assessment also noted that the ACC are signatories of the MoU on Conversion Therapy.

We considered the positive social impacts of re-accrediting the ACC and considered that accrediting the ACC, as a counselling and psychotherapy register, will provide a way of closing the skills and demand and gaps in the current state provision of mental health services. Accreditation is considered to have a positive impact given that it will raise confidence and awareness in the profession, and therefore, increase referrals from GPs, alleviating pressures on the NHS.

The Accreditation Panel found that it is therefore in the public interest to re-accredit the ACC.