

ANNUAL REPORT

The National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society
and

The National Hypnotherapy Society

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Independent Assessor for Governance and Audit

National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society and National
Hypnotherapy Society

**INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR
REPORT FOLLOWING
SITE-VISIT ON
NOVEMBER 11th, 2025**

This report is submitted to the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (NCPS) following the annual site visit conducted by the Independent Assessor (IA), Dr Phillip A. Rees, on Tuesday November 11th, 2025.

The role of the Independent Assessor is to provide an objective and independent evaluation of the Society's governance, accreditation, complaints handling, and professional standards processes, to ensure transparency, fairness, and alignment with published policies and regulatory expectations. The annual visit forms part of NCPS's commitment to maintaining high standards of professional practice and public protection. During the visit, the Independent Assessor held discussions with key personnel. This report outlines the findings from that review, highlights areas of good practice, with the aim of supporting the Society's ongoing development and continuous improvement.

The Report is intended, as in previous annual visits, to focus on three specific areas:

- The Purpose of the Visit
- The Content of the Visit
- The Outcome and Conclusions of the Visit

The Purpose of the Visit

The purpose of the Independent Assessor's annual visit to the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (NCPS) is to provide independent assurance that the Society's key functions are being carried out fairly, transparently, and in accordance with its published policies and professional standards.

In particular, the annual visit enables the Independent Assessor to review how NCPS applies its governance, accreditation, and professional standards processes in practice by:

- assessing the handling of complaints and concerns to ensure they are managed appropriately, consistently, and with due regard to public protection
 - confirming that decision-making processes are independent, proportionate, and evidence-based
 - identifying areas of good practice and highlight opportunities for improvement
 - supporting NCPS's commitment to accountability, continuous improvement, and maintaining public confidence in the profession
- Overall, the visit provides reassurance to NCPS, its members, and the public, that robust systems are in place to uphold professional standards within counselling and psychotherapy.

The primary function of regular annual visits is to examine how the policies, protocols and procedures of the Societies are administered and managed, and to focus on how the Societies seek feedback and involvement with registrants, members, and a range of service users. To enable independent scrutiny of the Societies policies, protocols, and procedures, which form the basis of this Report, the Chief Executive arranged an agenda of meetings for the Independent Assessor on Tuesday November 11th, 2025. This agenda included conversations with:

Jyles Robillard-Day : CEO

Faye Blackwell : Head of Engagement and Development

Kate Mahoney – Head of Training Services and Professional Standards

Grace Simpson and Sara Dyer : Professional Conduct Managers

Beth Keeling – Communications Manager

Meg Moss: Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy

Camilla Hyland : Head of Operations

The primary purpose for the annual site visit of the Independent Assessor is to reinforce the Societies commitment to the standards of transparency and accountability towards members, registrants, service users and the Professional Standards Authority, through regular and ongoing assessment and analysis of administrative and management systems and processes.

The Content of the Visit

Content of the site visit involved conversations and discussions with Society personnel including the Chief Executive Officer, Head of Engagement and Development, Head of Training and Professional Standards, Professional Conduct Officers, Communications Manager, Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy, and Head of Operations.

Meeting with Jyles Robillard-Day, Chief Executive Officer.

The role of the CEO is central to the upholding of both the reputation and national development of the Societies, combined with the responsibilities of overseeing administration within the national office and the new satellite office in Exeter, in addition, to addressing the needs of Registrants and prospective Registrants. The maintenance of ethical and professional standards and quality of services also falls within the remit of the Chief Executive.

The CEO is also responsible for preserving membership of the Accredited Register (AR) status with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). As a result of recognition by the Professional Standards Authority, the Societies retain a large footprint on the national therapy map. There are a growing number of Professional Bodies, throughout the UK, who have achieved Accredited Register (AR status with the PSA, and this recognition and status accords both prestige and credibility to both Societies. However, neither Society accepts this status and recognition lightly, remaining cognizant of the importance of constant reviewing of policies, procedures, and protocols to ensure that standards are preserved and maintained. The Chief Executive Officer also accepts the responsibility of addressing any PSA Action Points to further enhance the Societies PSA status, whenever and wherever they may be required. The Chief Executive Officer works closely with the Independent Assessor in ensuring that the auditing and governance of the Societies remains of paramount importance in terms of public recognition and accountability.

The Chief Executive Officer ensures that standards are maintained *vis-à-vis* Registrants of the Societies and works closely to ensure that the standards and quality of training provided by external training organisations, and accepted by the Societies, are upheld – for the purposes of the Accredited Register. In addition, the Chief Executive shoulders the responsibility of contacts with the public, Registrants and Prospective Members and Training Providers; this involves close liaison and shared responsibility with all members of staff in the national office in Worthing.

The structure of the Societies has been designed to enable the CEO to focus and prioritise on developmental areas for the Societies.

A range of important topics were considered by the Independent Assessor and the CEO, in reviewing what had changed over the past twelve months. This included discussions on the challenges and problems that constantly need to be addressed.

Areas which have been part of the remit and responsibility of the CEO, and formed part of the discussions with the Independent Assessor, included:

- (i) Professional Standards Authority. Annual Re-Accreditation check form has been submitted. This included responding to several recommendations following the full renewal in the previous year. There was one remaining Condition – this was for the Societies to have a Business Continuity Policy, and this has now been completed.
- (ii) Engagement with the PSA to find a common ground on the question of Statutory Regulation for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Further conversations are needed on this important area and there are also conversations with the Partnership of Counselling and Psychotherapy Bodies (PCPB) to establish whether it might be possible for the profession to be able to speak with one voice.
- (iii) SCoPED partnership has now been relaunched as the Partnership of Counselling and Psychotherapy Bodies (PCPB) to better express the joint working of the partnership beyond the SCoPED Framework and to allow one contact for stakeholders.
- (iv) Overseeing the dedicated team of staff who work with Members and Registrants to promote the influence of the Societies within Counselling and Hypnotherapy sectors.
- (v) Discussion of the Annual Conference from June 2025 – 250 delegates – currently planning is taking place for the 2026 Annual Conference.
- (vi) In addition to attending several Conferences for the benefit of networking and promoting the NCPS, the CEO also attended the International Association of Counselling Conference in Malta. One outcome of this has been the conversations with organisations from across the world on the use of AI in therapy.
- (vii) A new website is about to be launched which will bring a fresh look to the Societies and make information easier to access.
- (viii) EDI policy – new policy has been written and will be circulated to members for feedback and comments.
- (ix) Code of Ethics – under review.
- (x) Working with Head Office staff, Regional Support Groups and Ambassadors to maintain the continuing growth of membership within the Societies.
- (xi) Reviewing the barriers to recognition and Accreditation status for both the NCPS and Members and Registrants in general.

The above highlights the influence of the CEO in underscoring the involvement and influence of the Society within the professional sectors, together with the growth of its collaboration with training centres and organisations and Healthcare Professionals, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This is combined with the multiplicity of challenges that continue to face the NCPS. The NCPS is fortunate to have an CEO who is an experienced communicator, and provides experience, dedication, and rigorous commitment to the upholding of Standards and to the ongoing recognition, growth, and development of the Societies.

Meeting with Faye Blackwell - Head of Engagement and Development.

The Head of Engagement and Development has been in post for four years: during this time, they have consolidated the profile of Engagement and Development by creating new connections in a range of different areas and sectors, to promote and advance the NCPS brand name and raise awareness of its influence and

reputation within the various therapeutic, education and healthcare sectors. This has had a positive impact within the membership of NCPS and resulted in greater confidence in and within the NCPS.

The benefits resulting from the role of Head of Engagement and Development have included:

- i. An increase in Organisational Membership applications – 137 (at time of annual visit) organisations are now registered on the NCPS Directory. This is a measure of the commitment and dedication of the Engagement and Development team to the growth and development of recognised organisations.
- ii. Modifications to the membership criteria for Recognised Counselling Services have been implemented since the last annual visit. The process of transitioning counselling services from Organisational Member (OM) to Recognised Counselling Service (RCS) status, continues.
- iii. An important area has been the work to improve recognition of the NCPS within the counselling sector are continuous and ongoing. Relationships with EAP's is a positive and productive sign of this. Enhancements to the Recognised Counselling Services application process is intended to strengthen trust and credibility within the profession.
- iv. Developing the awareness of NCPS through Regional Groups – there are currently two Regional Representatives in post.
- v. The NCPS Therapy Hub continues to be actively promoted. A new scheme offering supportive workplace supervision to charities and services is showing potential to create paid opportunities for members.
- vi. Continuing expansion of members benefits – in the near future regular 'Lunchtime Learning' webinars, with specialist speakers presenting their own areas of expertise.
- vii. The Engagement and Development department remains prominent within NCPS in supporting members, maintaining professional standards, and striving for greater recognition across the sector, whilst retaining and upholding its core values and ethos.

The Head of Engagement and Development carries the responsibility of nurturing and developing existing relationships within the Counselling sector and beyond, as well as creating new ones.

In addition, the role and remit of the Head of Engagement and Development has been to challenge education and healthcare institutions, as well as businesses and EAPs, who have not included NCPS in their course provision, or job advertisements. This involves raising the profile of the NCPS by attendance at Conferences and related meetings of those involved in the Counselling and Psychotherapy sector.

The Head of Engagement and Development continues to be involved in challenging any lack of recognition for the NCPS, and at looking for ways of expanding the presence and influence of the NCPS within the Counselling and Psychotherapy sector, and the past year has again evidenced the success of this involvement and inclusion.

The Independent Assessor acknowledges that the role of the Head of Engagement and Development has enhanced the development and growth of the NCPS over the past year locally, regionally, and nationally and not only promoted the NCPS but also challenge those who would exclude the NCPS from professional involvement in the counselling arena. The Independent Assessor affirms the initiative of the Society in continually assessing new ways of extending the influence of the NCPS across all sectors, which includes the therapeutic community and the political community. The Independent Assessor also records that the NCPS has their own Champion in the Head of Engagement and Development.

Meeting with Kate Mahoney, Head of Training Services & Professional Standards.

The Head of Training Services & Professional Standards carries the responsibilities of overseeing and advising on the following:

- Policy and procedures for standards of training and associated applications for course(s) recognition.
- Managing standards for the Accredited Register (AR) and associated sub-registers.
- Managing assessments for complex applications for the AR.
- Advisor for members' ethical queries.
- Individual members' audits
- Training provider audits
- Government and regulation issues
- Relations with other professional associations
- Registrar
- Chair of the Professional Standards Committee
- Member of SCoPED partners collaboration

The Head of Training Services & Professional Standards has an influential impact on the reputation and development of Professional Standards for training and individual memberships and remains committed to extending the reputation of the Societies on training, and, in particular, accredited training, within the sector of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

The role of the Head of Training Services & Professional Standards is also to consider the delivery of recognised courses by Training Providers. This involves examination of course content and the assessment process. An important, if not crucial, part of the role is to maintain and extend/develop standards. This involves fielding questions about training information, combined with considering complex membership applications. As with membership of the Societies, there is a significant growth of recognised and accredited training providers.

The brief of the Professional Standards Committee is to review and update the Society's internal processes and procedures where professional standards are concerned and maintain an awareness of all external issues that may impact upon the profession of counselling and psychotherapy.

As of **11/11/25** the following reflects the numbers of Actual and Projected figures of course(s) during 2025 (October 2025):

[REDACTED]

The department continues to receive various expressions of interest for course recognition from both new and existing training providers. This headlines the developing relationships with these interested training providers and offer support and guidance with regards to the application process. The training services department continue to actively identify qualifying courses that are not recognised by the Societies and are making proactive approaches to support applications for course recognition. The focus remains on courses that would potentially be eligible for course Accreditation. New applications for course accreditation continue to be assessed in line with SCoPED 'column A' competencies.

The CPD calendar for 2025 has predominantly offered online (synchronous) CPD training with ■■■ events being offered this year across both Societies. The calendar for 2026 is increasing with more courses/dates being submitted regularly – the majority being offered online.

CPD training has been exceptionally effective with only 3 courses having to be cancelled due to lack of attendees. Offering CPD training in this way has helped the membership, too, in that there are no geographical boundaries so the full membership can take advantage of this service benefit irrespective of where they are based.

It is important to record the importance and contribution of the Professional Standards Committee, which continues to bring a breadth of knowledge and experience from its members. The Committee's remit is not only to consult on Standards of training and support assessment of complex individual applications for the Accredited Register. They also support the department/Societies by assessing and verifying the processes employed to assess training courses and ensure they meet standards by verifying a random selection of the work the department carries out.

The Independent Assessor acknowledges that, through the leadership of the Head of Training Services and Professional Standards Committee, this important area of the Societies remains fundamental to the credibility and accountability of the work of the Societies and recognises its importance to the overall effectiveness of the work and ethos of NCPS.

Meeting with Grace Simpson and Sara Dyer, Professional Conduct Managers (Complaints)

The Independent Assessor met with Grace Simpson, who has been a Professional Conduct Manager with the society since November 2024. The complaints department is overseen by Camilla Hyland, Operations Manager for the NCPS. Also present was Sara Dyer, who was appointed as the second Professional Conduct Manager in September 2025 due to the increase in caseload. The purpose of this meeting was to review the complaints process covering 2025-2026.

The purpose of the Professional Conduct Department is to protect the public and uphold professional standards within counselling and psychotherapy by managing concerns about the conduct, competence, and practice of its members.

Specifically, the department is responsible for:

- receiving, assessing, and managing complaints and concerns about NCPS members in line with published policies and procedures
- ensuring concerns are handled fairly, proportionately, and transparently
- investigating potential breaches of the NCPS Code of Ethics and Professional Practice
- supporting appropriate decision-making through clear, evidence-based processes
- contributing to the maintenance of confidence in the profession by promoting accountability and professional responsibility

- overseeing the Societies role in responding to all concerns and complaints made against Members and Registrants of the Societies, and any complaints relating to Training Providers. The Professional Conduct Managers review all complaints and oversee and advise on how each case will be handled.
- referring to the Societies Council any related issues that may be of relevance to policies and procedures – thus ensuring that the Societies have a constantly evolving approach to all issues relating to public safety. Overall, the Professional Conduct Department plays a central role in safeguarding service users, supporting ethical practice, and reinforcing public trust in the standards upheld by NCPS.

A separate Report, from the meeting with the Professional Conduct Managers, is submitted by the Independent Assessor following the annual site visit.

5. Meeting with Beth Keeling Communications Manager.

Beth Keeling was appointed in July 2025, as the Communications Manager, and brings a lot of experience from previous job roles, which have already had a positive impact upon the Communications department.

The purpose of the NCPS Communications Department is to ensure clear, accurate, and timely communication between the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society, its members, stakeholders, and the wider public, supporting transparency, engagement, and confidence in the Society's work.

In particular, the Communications Department is responsible for:

- Publications.
- Contacts with and development of social media.
- providing consistent and accessible information about NCPS policies, services, and professional standards.
- supporting member engagement through updates, guidance, and promotional communications.
- managing external communications to promote public understanding of counselling and psychotherapy and the role of NCPS.

The work and output of the Communications Department in the past 12 months includes:
the Society's social media presence which has continued to grow across most platforms

[REDACTED]

Magazine readership continues to perform strongly across all titles.

[REDACTED]

Overall, the Communications Department's remit is to promote and strengthen the voice and reputation of NCPS by delivering clear, ethical, transparent and accessible communication to members, the public, stakeholders, and the wider counselling sector.

The Independent Assessor affirms the work of the department, and the commitment and dedication of the Communications Manager.

Meeting with Meg Moss, Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy.

The Head of Policy and Public has been in post since August 2022 and has been progressing the role and responsibilities of involvement in policy and public affairs.

Under the management leadership of this department, the Public and Affairs and Advocacy department has enhanced the presence and influence of NCPS across government and mental health sector by combining targeted advocacy with visible sector leadership.

Through the commitment of the Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy there has been significant progress in Therapeutic Relationship work, a broadening of coalition activity, advancing briefings across a range of topics and positioned NCPS as a thoughtful and pragmatic voice on AI in mental health. Combined with multiple policy submissions and parliamentary engagements, there has been increasing influence through the Climate Minds Coalition, sector partnerships (including CPCAB and PCPB) and other cross-sector forums.

The Head of Policy and Public Affairs has also engaged in seminars with the Westminster Health Forum on a range of healthcare topics, including mental health, and this has seen another area of development for the Societies.

In addition, the Head of Policy and Public Affairs has contributed a wide range of articles for the NCPS's magazine 'Counselling Matters' and the blog.

The Head of Policy and Public Affairs has continuously described her role as *"aiming to grow and refine NCPS policies alongside key stakeholders, both in the profession and beyond."* To achieve this, the Head of Policy and Public Affairs is involved in:

- i) Internal and External Policies.
- ii) Talking to politicians involved in Health and Education.
- iii) Being present to respond to relevant political concerns.
- iv) Being seen, becoming known, and having a sector voice on behalf of the NCPS.
- v) Project managing the new website.
- vi) Involvement in Code of Ethics/Safeguarding

This role carries responsibilities for the expansion and growth of the Societies, for being the voice of accountability in the therapeutic sector and beyond. The NCPS is fortunate to have someone fronting Policy and Public Affairs who has a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the NCPS and has been part of its development for more than 10 years. The Head of Policy and Public Affairs is also someone who is eager to promote the work of the NCPS and seek new and different ways of achieving this.

Meeting with Camilla Hyland, Head of Operations

The Head of Operations is responsible for ensuring the effective, efficient, and compliant day-to-day running of NCPS, translating strategic priorities into operational delivery while maintaining high standards of governance, service quality, and member experience. The primary purpose of the Head of Operations is to oversee and improve organisational systems, processes, and resources, enabling NCPS to meet its regulatory, ethical, and professional obligations and to deliver a high-quality service to its members and stakeholders.

The IA has identified these responsibilities as including:

- Leading the day-to-day operations of NCPS, ensuring services run smoothly, consistently, and in line with strategic objectives.
Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical, and safeguarding requirements relevant to a professional membership body.
- Manage operational staff, promoting a culture of professionalism, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Monitor service quality, member feedback, and operational performance indicators.
- Drive improvements to systems and processes that enhance member experience.
- Oversee operational systems (e.g. CRM, MSO).
- Act as a key link between strategic leadership and operational delivery.
- Oversee membership trends and feedback from registrants, students, and non-registrants. [REDACTED]

Practically, The Head of Operations makes sure NCPS works properly every day — that systems are reliable, staff are supported, risks are managed, and members receive a high-quality, professional service.

The Independent Assessor can confidently report that the Societies have a dynamic Head of Operations who, with the department, provides a wide range of skills and levels of competency, and not a little commitment to the ethos of the Societies, working to ensure that a high-quality relationship is preserved between the Societies and the Registrants, and the wider therapeutic communities and service users. Head of Operations also ensures a consistent approach to communicating the benefits of membership of the Societies, in addition to the upholding of standards.

Conclusions and Outcomes of the 2025 On-Site Visit.

The Independent Assessor undertakes annual visits to the offices of the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society to ensure an independent and objective appraisal of the Society's work, to evidence transparency and accountability, and to confirm the effectiveness of its quality assurance arrangements. The observations and conclusions outlined below reflect and reinforce those presented in previous Annual Reports and consider the continued expansion of NCPS's influence within the caring and therapeutic sectors over the past twelve months.

Communication

The Independent Assessor observed robust and highly effective communication processes across the Society. Enquirers are consistently supported by staff who demonstrate a knowledgeable, coherent, and professional understanding of the Society's work. This applies equally to existing members and Registrants, prospective members, corporate and organisational stakeholders, training providers, professional bodies across counselling, psychotherapy, psychology, and hypnotherapy, as well as educational and awarding bodies seeking clarification regarding accreditation status.

The conclusion of the Independent Assessor is that this consistency and clarity of communication is achieved through strong leadership from the Chief Executive, well-defined management structures, and a clear sense of cohesion across staff teams based in Worthing and Exeter.

Competence

The Independent Assessor's visit and discussions with key personnel demonstrates a high level of collective competence across the Society, encompassing the Chief Executive, Public Protection Officer, Head of Professional Standards and Training Services, Head of Engagement and Development, Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy, Head of Membership Services, and the wider administrative team.

This collective expertise underpins the Society's continuing development of effective marketing and communication strategies, including the website, online visibility, digital advertising, online CPD provision, social media engagement, and the production of monthly publications. There is clear evidence of sound knowledge and understanding of the Society's governance framework, policies, and statutory responsibilities, including complaints handling, DBS and enhanced DBS processes, and GDPR compliance.

The Independent Assessor further notes an ongoing and demonstrable commitment to quality and standards. Quality assurance is embedded throughout the Society's governance arrangements and reinforces good practice in management, administration, and information dissemination.

Commitment

The purpose of the Independent Assessor's visit is to provide an impartial overview of how the Society operates, how it upholds its principles, and how these are communicated effectively to members and external stakeholders. The findings of this visit confirm strong executive leadership and a high level of collegiality across both management and administrative teams.

There is clear evidence of commitment to the Society's mission and to the continued development of its work and reputation. This is supported by a growing depth of knowledge and engagement within the therapeutic professions, alongside a consistent focus on strengthening the principles, policies, and professional standing of an emerging and increasingly influential professional body.

Collective Responsibility

A particularly notable and consistent feature of the Independent Assessor's observations is the Societies clear intention to maintain and develop its growth and development as a significant contributor within the UK therapeutic community and beyond. While recognition by the Professional Standards Authority and the achievement and maintenance of Accredited Register status are acknowledged as major milestones, the Independent Assessor observed no evidence of complacency.

Instead, there is a clear understanding of the ongoing responsibility to uphold demanding professional standards, values, and principles; to meet the needs of members and Registrants; to ensure effective complaints handling and public protection, and to continue evolving within a dynamic professional landscape.

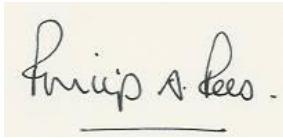
The Society also demonstrates an appropriate awareness that continuous improvement is essential and that challenges and opportunities will continue to arise across areas such as marketing, communication, and professional promotion. The Independent Assessor concludes that NCPS remains firmly committed to maintaining the standards expected of a professional body representing a large and growing community of therapists, counsellors, and training providers.

Overall Conclusion

The purpose of this Report has been to provide an appraisal and overview of the Society's work as observed during the Independent Assessor's on-site visit, to highlight areas of good practice, and to identify opportunities for ongoing development and improvement. The Independent Assessor's remit can also include the identification of any concerns requiring action.

It is the conclusion of this Report that **no major or minor concerns were identified** requiring action in the immediate future. All objective and action points arising from previous Independent Assessor reports have been fully addressed and achieved.

The Independent Assessor therefore presents and commends this Report as an accurate and comprehensive reflection of the findings arising from the annual visit conducted with the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (and the Hypnotherapy Society) on **Tuesday 11 November 2025**.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light beige background. The signature reads "Phillip A. Rees" in a cursive script, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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