**RWPN Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 28th May 2020 – via Zoom/phone**

**Minutes**

**Present: Norma Baillie, Jim Bole, Andrea Doyle, Debbie James, Martin Kearney, Simon Labbett (chair), Pete Lock, Simmone Miller, Ian Moran, Nic Poole, Dawn Taylor**

**In attendance: Amanda Labbett**

**Apologies from: Daniel Scholes**

1. **COVID-19**

Committee members described their perception of services in their area or in their specialist field. Whilst two areas were offering home visits in emergencies, the majority were assessing by phone (some with drop off equipment visits) and one area with no contact appearing to be made with clients. Concern was expressed that those services where managers were least aware of the risk to service users were the ones a greatest risk of slow restart of services, scrapping of waiting lists and quick closure of cases.

Discussion on how visually impaired ROVIs might resume practice. Dawn confirmed that the What’s App group was still active and open to new enquiries from members.

Discussion around profile of RWPN during crisis. Simon outlined the contribution to national debates with RNIB, TPT, Guide Dogs, Visionary etc. around services for blind and partially sighted people. The committee felt that we had kept a good profile and the initial guidance of 7th May had been well received. There was extensive discussion about the O&M guidance (submitted in advance of this meeting). **Re-drafted guidance to be sent to committee before distribution following week.**

**Simon to discuss with TPT, RNIB and GD support for ADASS-endorsed statement about rehab services restarting.**

1. Apprenticeship EPA

RWPN’s letter to employers regarding the rescheduled dates was sent the previous week (following committee consultation on refusing the option to modify the O&M assessment). Simon confirmed two employer replies that were positive but no other replies. Simon also said that the new External Quality Assurance Organisation (following furloughing of Vision UK) would be Open Awards. Discussion with Open Awards due week of 1st June. Simon said he had spoken with BCU earlier in the day: applications for next year are still fine but there is no guarantee that face-to-face teaching will take place in September.

1. Annual Seminar

The meeting confirmed that, in addition to the live event not going ahead, it would not be possible to organise alternative webinars on the day either because it would be too much to handle at a time when we all had other pressures both linked to RWPN and normal ROVI work.

However it was agreed that the date should be set aside to promote the work of ROVIs and that we should be asking members to document their work, their successes and rewards in the job in a way that can be displayed on the website and promoted wider.

**Simon requested further suggestions of how this might happen but said he and Amanda would put it together.**

1. **CPD**

Simon requested a decision about whether the required CPD hours should be reduced due to COVID-19 and the impact on training. It was agreed that the hours would remain the same. The website has a new section dedicated to CPD ideas and the general view was that this had been an ideal time to document CPD and look around for on-line learning.

Simon alerted the committee to the new sections in the guidance around how portfolios were being assessed, and that this was based on excellent feedback from our external assessors.

1. Workforce ratio

Simon presented a paper that had been submitted to Vision UK’s Early Intervention and Enablement Committee and which factored in some of the new data from the member survey. Simon said that the figures had been taken up by RNIB and Guide Dogs colleagues for use in their internal discussions. The committee endorsed this workforce ratio (for England). **Simon to publicise result of workforce survey to membership.**

1. Professional Registration

Simon said that this process had had to take a back seat during COVID-19. He said he had started the application but felt he need a more focused group to work on it, including the proposals for a standards committee. **Ian, Simmone, Andrea and Dawn agreed to work with Simon on this.**

**Simon to contact PSA to cancel their involvement in annual seminar**

Matters not covered in meeting but to be noted:

Current financial position: Current account £35,473.01. Savings account £5,002.48. Paypal £3,650.21

Year-end accounts signed off and submitted. Corporation tax £2,979.20 paid.

**No time for discussion on AGM or for cost of membership next year. No date for next meeting.**