**RWPN Committee Minutes 22/10/2020**

1/. Attendees (via Teams): Simon Labbett (Chair), Daniel Scholes (Minutes) Debbie James, Nicola Poole, Martin Kearney, Andrea Doyle, Simmone Miller, Dawn Taylor

2/. Apologies: James Bole, Norma Baillie

3/. Matters arising: As Pete Lock has now stood down from the committee we need a new secretary. Please speak to Simon if you are interested in taking on this role. Amanda will take over the administration of membership and become Membership Secretary, checking members have the required qualifications and updating the register. Pete Lock to enquire about a successor to represent Northern Ireland on the committee.

4/. Finances: Current account = £35,645.09, Savings account = £5,003.53

PayPal account = 2,913.38, Total = 43,561.62

Membership update: Guide Dogs will make a group membership payment for their RW’s beginning in January 2021.

5/. Professional Standards Authority

Matt Broom’s report was discussed, including how we manage resources for larger projects. It was felt that we are unable to pay for a full time worker and that the way ahead would be to employ freelance personnel on a project by project basis. We should avoid the additional requirements of being an employer at this stage of our development.

Proposed professional Standards committee (info circulated prior to meeting): discussion took place on make-up of this committee and **it was agreed** that Amanda Labbett would carry out the admin tasks and take the minutes. **It was further agreed** that the committee should consist of 9 members comprising 4 RW’s, 3 Managers and 2 lay members (with a disability).

Criteria for membership: we will be looking for people who have at least 3 years work experience. If retired, they would need to be able to evidence an up-to-date knowledge of the field. They would need to be able to evidence scrutiny and experience of monitoring standards and to be confident with technology. The time commitment would be a minimum of 2 meetings a year plus reading relevant documentation and sitting on any disciplinary panels which have been convened. **Simon to draft application form in addition to current job description.**

**It was agreed** that the Professional Standards committee should stand autonomously from RWPN (i.e. no member of the management committee would sit on it) but be accountable to it.

PSA application process. Simon said he had had a meeting with PSA the previous week. PSA are willing to look over an application prior to one being submitted. **It was agreed** that Simon will send out a draft for the committee to look over and comment on before it is submitted. The cost of application is around £13,500.

**Simon to discuss PSA application process and new committee and invite applications at the AGM.**

6/. Apprenticeship End Point Assessment: The first cohort of apprenticeship have sat our case study component in September (via email and Teams). Due to the ongoing Covid19 situation the mobility assessments in Birmingham are yet to be done and are probably not viable in the current form due to COVID restrictions. Discussions on-going with the EQAO (Open Awards) into how an alternative assessment would meet the requirements of the EPA. One option might be a video of the student teaching mobility followed up by a Viva (assessed by RWPN assessor). Andrew Dodgson to work on options.

RWPN’s contract with BCU means we are paid around £1,000 per apprentice and we currently have 8 students who have gone through gateway. The costs accrued to RWPN have been £4,000 in total up until this point. 4/5 more students are due to be assessed in this year’s cycle. Next year around 24 students will require an EPA. Simon reported that we currently have no contract with BCU for next year’s apprentices and has written to BCU to request an extension of the contract.

The Apprenticeship Standard assessment plan requires that EPA assessor “have or be working towards” an assessor level 3 qualification. Only one assessor currently has this qualification and this not a tenable position. **It was agreed** that RWPN will pay for the training course (£400) plus reasonable expenses and train 2 assessors this year and 2 assessors next year.

Ofqual. Simon reported that he and Simmone had had initial discussions with Ofqual around the application to go on to their register of approved End Point Assessment Organisations. This is necessary because all external quality assurance is being handed to Ofqual in future and the Rehabilitation Worker apprenticeship is in the first tranche for transferring. There is concern that RWPN would find the process lengthy, time-consuming and, (as a very small organisation), we would need to update a wide range of operational processes .

**It was agreed** that RWPN will review the application to Ofqual in the new year once the PSA application has been submitted and the current EPA adaptations have been approved. Simon to inform Ofqual of our intentions so that they can consider the implications of having no EPAO for this apprenticeship standard.

Simon reported that the Rehab Worker apprenticeship standard is coming up for review as it has been 3 years since its inception. RWPN is not directly involved in this because we are not an employer, but we need to have a stake in the process.

7/. AGM: Debbie will do a presentation probably around deaf-blindness and Covid 19. Daniel will do a short financial update.

8/. Film : Simon said he had been approached with a suggestion to make a short film/documentary about what a RW does. It was felt there may be pre-existing footage from a number of sources. It was suggested to talk to BCU about this, to find out what video material RW’s may already have from their own experience (including Norma) and that Richard Cox may also have some relevant material.

9/. COVID-19. There has been some good feedback about RWPN’s guidance re Covid 19 and the survey has produced some useful insights.

We discussed the need to promote RWPN more and to become more transparent and **it was agreed** that each committee member will provide a photo along with a short paragraph about themselves. This needs to be submitted by the 31st October and will be uploaded onto the RWPN website. It was also suggested that we think about employing a PR person to assist with promoting RWPN.

10/. AOB Registration Cards: Andrea raised the issue of RWPN having a position on the requirement for local authorities to issue registration cards in a situation where RNIB were ceasing production of the blank cards. It was agreed RWPN should be supporting the idea of local authorities being required to issue cards (in line with the CVI guidance). **Andrea to investigate the issue further and suggest next steps.**

11/. Date of next meeting: February 17th 2021 (9.30-11am).