

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD
Notes of the 142nd Meeting of the Committee on Administration

Date: 5 Sept 2019
Time: 7:10 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room, 26/F Eastern Commercial Centre, 83 Nam On Street, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong.
Present: Dr. TING Wai-fong (Convenor)
Ms. CHEUNG Lai-yi
Mr. LO Wa-kei, Roy
Ms. LUI Siu-ying
Mr. LUN Chi-wai
Secretary: Mr. LEE Wing-po, Eric, Registrar
Ms. Chan May-shan, Emily, Assistant Registrar

Matters Arising

1. Confirmation of the notes of last meeting

There was no amendment to the notes which were confirmed as the true record of the last meeting held on 2 July 2019.

2. Matters arising

- (a) Revised procedures of handling complaints against the Board's policy or staff

Para.2(c) of last meeting notes

The Committee took note of the revised draft of the policy and procedures with English translation prepared by the Board Office. The Secretary added that the Chinese version of the draft was circulated to the Committee via email before.

(Anonymized) proposed changing the word "respondent" as "complainee" (identified in Pt. 7 & 17). (Anonymized) further pointed out the English translation of the Pt. 10 should be amended to reflect the meaning of acknowledgement of the content of the complaint/opinion instead of the acknowledgement of the receipt of complaint/opinion solely. The above two suggestions were adopted by the meeting.

Members preferred to have more time for a thorough examination of the draft, the Board Office will prepare the revised draft for approval at the next meeting.

- (b) Development of the integrated database and information system

Para.2(e) of last meeting notes

The Committee took note that due to the recent staff turnover, the preparation of the system development was put on hold and would be resumed when the establishment settled down.

- (c) Appointments to the Disciplinary Committee Panel

Para.2(f) of last meeting notes

The Secretary briefed the background and summarized the results of open nomination with reference to COA142-2c. 140 nominations were received but 4 of them were found ineligible.

The breakdown is as below:

Group (a): Degree-holder

88 RSWs (29 of them are current panellists), 8 to be followed up with their CVs;

Group (b): Diploma-holder

11 RSWs (4 of them are current panellists), 2 to be followed up with their CVs; &

Group (c): 37 Lay-persons (2 of them are current panellists), 9 to be followed up with their CVs.

(Mr. LUN joined the meeting at this juncture.)

After deliberation, the Committee came into consensus of the following points:

- (i) For Group (a), members considered the comparable size of the upcoming Group (c) and a prospective increase in complaint cases, it recommended to:
 - (1) Appoint all the 88 names, subject to the 8 with CVs missing furnishing the documents to complete the nominations;
 - (2) No current panellists who are not named in the open nomination will be invited for re-appointment.
- (ii) For Group (b), since the number of nominees received from open nomination at 11 falls short of the minimum statutory requirement at 12, members recommended to:
 - (1) Appoint all the 11 names, subject to the 2 with CVs missing furnishing the document to complete the nomination;
 - (2) Invite the 9 current panellists who have not been named in the open nomination but have been active in responding in the term to conflict check for re-appointment.
- (iii) For Group (c), members considered the importance to keep the wealth of expertise and experience of veteran lay-person panellist and recommended to:-
 - (1) Appoint all 37 lay-persons nominated, subject to the 9 with CVs missing furnishing the document to complete the nomination;
 - (2) Confirm the invitation to the 6 nominees via the Law Society of Hong Kong;
 - (3) Invite the 24 current panellists who are not named in the opening nomination but have been active in responding in the term to conflict check (excluding (Anonymized)) for re-appointment.
- (iv) For those nominees with CVs missing, the deadline for submission will be extended to 13 Sept 2019, failing to submit that their nominations would be considered incomplete and no appointment should be offered.
- (v) The Committee also recommended that, in future, the conflict check for Group (a) should be confined to the sub-group by work setting, so as to better manage the spread of personal

data of the parties in the case among the Group. In case of complaint not related to specific practice, the check has to be across-the-board. This new practice should be reviewed if the number of returns of conflict free would become an issue.

This above recommendations will be put forth to the Board for approval.

(d) Replacement of CCTV system

Two more quotations were sourced and a total of 4 quotations of different brands from two vendors were attached in COA142-2d for consideration. The Committee resolved to purchase the brand of (Business information deleted) vended by (Business information deleted), which was within the approval authority of the Committee.

Para. 2(g) of last meeting notes

(e) Renewal refund scheme review

The Committee took note of the background and review of the scheme with reference to COA142-2e. In view of the scheme's inability to increase the number of RSWs renewal within the window period, no saving in postage, and the increased cost of operation, members deliberated and recommended to terminate the scheme by end of this year, after considering all possible alternatives for reforming the scheme. This recommendation will be put forth to the Board for approval.

Para. 3(a) of last meeting notes

3. Administration

(a) Formulation of "Fit and Proper Criteria"

The Committee took note of the background with reference to COA142-3a. Members noted that this matter is now pending the finalization of the review of the Code of Practice by the Committee on Professional Conduct, and the task is in principle in the hands of the Committee of Qualification Assessment and Registration ("CQAR).

Members would like to make recommendations to the CQAR on the "Fit and Proper Criteria" and highlighted that the aspects of character, mental health and financial conditions should be taken into consideration.

(b) Proposed measures for improving the electronic communication with RSWs

The Secretary briefed the background and considerations with reference to COA142-3b. Two measures were recommended: (1) by hiring a third party SMTP service and (2) SMS Gateway Service. Quotations of 2 vendors of each measure were prepared.

Members agreed that the two measures could enhance the Board's

communications with RSWs by (1) reducing the chance of unsuccessful email delivery due to the classification as spam mails or auto-blockage by the email service providers; (2) introducing a more accessible and convenient way of communication.

The Committee supported the adoption of the above 2 measures and it will be put forth to the Board for approval.

4. Finance

(a) Outsourcing book-keeping work

The Secretary briefed the background and considerations with reference to COA142-4b. Members took note of the benefits of hiring an outsource service in particular to improve the financial reporting timeline and to minimize the disturbances due to staff turnover. The estimated cost is (Business information deleted), which is considered reasonable and within the contingency expenses provided in the budget for the current financial year.

(Anonymized) shared his concern of the risks of confidentiality and the Secretary replied that the conduct of professional accounting firms are governed by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and some kind of service agreements on data privacy and confidentiality would be entered for the engagement.

The Committee supported this move but preferred on-site service for better protection of confidentiality. This will be followed up by the Board office.

5. Promotions

The Committee received the report (COA142-5a) on the talks conducted for social work students and other organizations. Members appreciated the new presentation format that shows a clear picture of the figures and distribution of the Tertiary Institutions served.

6. Any other business

There being no other business.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on 15 November 2019 (Fri) at 7:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

END