

Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group

Minutes of the sixth meeting of the Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group held as follows:-

Date: Wednesday 12 May 2010

Time: 10:30 am

Venue: Avonmouth House, 6 Avonmouth Street, London, SE1 6NX

Present: Ms S Aldridge
Ms C Joanne Ablack
Ms F Ballantine Dykes
Mr P Bell
Mr J Coe
Professor M Cooper
Professor P Fonagy
Mr J Lousada (part of item 5 and items 6-9 inclusive)
Mr B Magee
Ms L Matthews
Ms J McMinn
Professor A Turner
Dr A van der Gaag (Chair)

In attendance:

Mr O Ammar, Acting Director of Education
Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Group
Ms A Dittmer, Policy Officer
Mr M Guthrie, Director of Policy and Standards
Ms L Hart, Secretary to Council
Ms J Ladds, Director of Communications
Ms T Samuel-Smith, Acting Director of Education
Ms C Urwin, Policy Manager

Item 1.10/1 Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M Clark-Glass, Professor J Lucas, Ms E Thornton (Dr van der Gaag attending instead), Mr N Turner (Mr Bell attending instead) and Professor D Waller.
- 1.2 The Group noted that Ms K Murphy was unable to continue as a member of the Group and that Ms C Joanne Ablack would attend the meeting and subsequent meetings instead.
- 1.3 The Group noted that Professor Waller, the Chair of the Group, was unable to attend due to illness. In accordance with the HPC's procedure for meetings where the Chair was absent, the Group agreed to appoint Dr van der Gaag as the Chair for the meeting.

Item 2.10/2 Approval of agenda

- 2.1 The Group approved the agenda.

Item 3.10/3 Minutes of the Professional Liaison Group meeting held on 26 and 27 May 2009 (report ref: PLG 1/10)

- 3.1 The Group agreed that the minutes of the fifth meeting of the Professional Liaison Group should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Item 4.10/4 Matters arising (report ref: PLG 2/10)

- 4.1 The Group received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 4.2 The Group noted the actions list as agreed at the last meeting.

Item 5.10/5 Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group (PLG) discussion paper (report ref: PLG 3/10)

- 5.1 The Group received a paper for discussion from the Executive.
- 5.2 The Chair asked individual members to reflect on the Group's work to date. Members generally felt that the Group had made good progress in its previous meetings, although there were areas where no decision had as yet been reached. The Group agreed that further work should take place in the following areas:

- whether the structure of the Register should differentiate between psychotherapists and counsellors;
- whether the structure of the Register should differentiate between those qualified to work with children and young people and those qualified to work with adults;
- the standards of proficiency for psychotherapists and counsellors. The Group noted that HPC had begun work on reviewing the generic standards of proficiency; and
- the threshold level(s) of qualification for entry to the Register.

5.3 The Group noted that there was continued debate within the profession about proposed regulation by HPC. While some stakeholders supported proposed regulation by HPC, others continued to have concerns or were opposed in principle to statutory regulation. Some members felt that the Group should attempt to address the concerns which had been raised.

5.4 The Group was invited to discuss the key issues, questions or issues that should be addressed by stakeholders invited to present to the Group. The Group agreed that it should seek information with the aim of identifying solutions in the areas listed in paragraph 5.2.

5.5 The Group agreed that the Executive should seek the following information:

- perspectives from service users. The Group agreed that this should include service users with positive experiences of counselling and psychotherapy and those with negative experiences. The Group noted that some organisations had conducted research on users' experiences and that members could provide contacts for service users' organisations and networks. It was suggested that the Group should consider how the proposals for regulation would affect the diversity of service users (for example, those accessing counselling and psychotherapy in the voluntary and private sectors).
- the international perspective on the issues relating to differentiation and threshold level(s) of qualification. The Group noted that a professional journal had recently published some relevant papers and that members could provide the names of organisations in Europe;

- perspectives on education and training, in order to address the issue of the threshold level(s) of qualification for entry. It was suggested that the Group could consider collated curricula from a variety of courses and seek evidence from community counselling training organisations. The Group noted that there were a variety of approaches to training, including approaches requiring a combination of qualifications plus specified hours of contact with clients and supervision;
- perspectives on working with children and young adults, including information on whether specialist skills were required to work with these client groups. This information would be sought in order to address the issue of whether the structure of the Register should differentiate between those qualified to work with children and young people and those qualified to work with adults. The Group noted that members could provide contacts and that there were also a number of professional bodies. The Group noted that one of the proposed questions in the paper would be refined to explore whether a combination of continuing professional development, experience and post-qualification training was needed to work with these client groups; and
- perspectives from stakeholders who were opposed to statutory regulation, relating to the areas listed at paragraph 5.2.

5.6 The Group considered the illustrative questions in the paper which were suggested to be posed to stakeholders. The Group agreed that it would be more appropriate to ask a question about the differences between psychotherapy and counselling and how these might be reflected in the draft standards of proficiency. The Group agreed that there should be a separate question on whether there was a difference between entry-level education and training for psychotherapy and for counselling (i.e. what a practitioner would need to know on starting their career).

Item 6.10/6 Psychotherapists and Counsellors PLG - Workplan (report ref: PLG 4/10)

- 6.1 The Group received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Group noted that, in the light of discussion above, the Executive would refine the questions to be sent to stakeholders and would circulate the questions by e-mail to members for their comments.

- 6.3 The Group noted that the timetable provided for it to meet four times between September and December 2010 to receive presentations from stakeholders. The Group agreed that it would be helpful if time could be allowed at each meeting for it to discuss the information received as well as listening to presentations.
- 6.4 The Group noted that, in parallel with the meetings of the Group, the HPC would hold a stakeholder event in each of the four countries of the UK. These would provide an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss aspects of the regulatory framework. The Group noted that members were welcome to attend the stakeholder events, which were not meetings of the Group.

Item 7.10/7 Responses to the consultation on the recommendations of the PLG and conclusions on the proposed statutory regulation of psychotherapists and counsellors (report ref: PLG 5/10)

- 7.1 The Group received a paper to note from the Executive.

Item 8.10/8 Any other business

- 8.1 There was no other business.

Item 9.10/9 Date of next and subsequent meetings

- 9.1 Subsequent meetings of the Group would be held on the following dates:

Thursday 30 September 2010
 Tuesday 19 October 2010
 Monday 15 November 2010
 Wednesday 15 December 2010
 Wednesday 2 February 2011

Chair

Date