

Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group

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

Date: Tuesday 19 October 2010

Time: 10:30 am

Venue: The Studio, Dominion Theatre, 268-269 Tottenham Court Road, London
W1T 7AQ

Present: Carmen Joanne Ablack
Sally Aldridge
Mary Clark-Glass
Jonathan Coe
Mick Cooper
Anthony Crouch
Peter Fonagy
Julian Lousada
Jeff Lucas (item 1-part of item 6 inclusive)
Brian Magee
Shirley Reynolds
Annie Turner
Nick Turner
Diane Waller (Chair)

In attendance:

Mr O Ammar, Acting Director of Education
Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Group
Ms E Gayle, Media and Public Relations Manager
Mr M Guthrie, Director of Policy and Standards
Ms L Hart, Secretary to Council (part of item 6-item 15 inclusive)
Mr J Nightingale, Association of Christian Counsellors
Ms G Randle, Association of Christian Counsellors
Mr S Rayner, Secretary to Committees (item 1-part of item 6 inclusive)
Ms C Urwin, Policy Manager
Dr A van der Gaag, Chair of Council

Item 1.10/24 Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Fiona Ballantine Dykes (Anthony Crouch attending instead), Linda Matthews (Shirley Reynolds attending instead), Jean McMinn and Eileen Thornton.

Item 2.10/25 Approval of agenda

- 2.1 The Group approved the agenda, subject to receiving these tabled papers as part of item 6:
- British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies draft standards for cognitive behavioural psychotherapists;
 - British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy position statement on regulation of psychotherapists and counsellors; and
 - statement from the Psychological Professions Alliance Group.

Item 3.10/26 Minutes of the Professional Liaison Group meeting held on 30 September 2010 (report ref: PLG 15/10)

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

Item 4.10/27 Matters arising

- 4.1 There were no matters arising.

Item 5.10/28 Presentation from Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC)

- 5.1 The Group received a presentation from Greta Randle, Chief Executive of ACC and John Nightingale, Director of Professional Standards, ACC.
- 5.2 The Group noted that ACC had been founded in 1992. Its membership comprised individuals and affiliated organisations, covering settings such as schools, hospitals, GP surgeries, counselling centres, training agencies and counselling for unemployed people. ACC provided accredited membership for counsellors and set standards for training courses.

5.3 The Group noted that approximately 80% of ACC's individual members were aged over 40 and were often people who had changed career, or returned to work after raising a family, or wished to contribute to society through counselling work. Individual members worked as counsellors either as volunteers, paid employees, or a combination of voluntary and paid work. Volunteers accumulated hours of practice as part of their work towards accreditation by ACC.

5.4 With regards to issues around regulation, the following points were made:

- ACC hoped that any transfer of voluntary registers to the HPC Register would be as inclusive as possible, in order to minimise the impact on services and to include experienced practitioners who did not hold formal qualifications. ACC felt that this would be in keeping with the coalition government's proposals for a 'Big Society', which encouraged individuals to take an active part in their communities;
- there was no clear view in the profession about differentiation between psychotherapy and counselling. This was reflected in the diversity of training and entry requirements. For example, while ACC identified itself as a counselling organisation, some of its individual members might also identify themselves as psychotherapists; and
- ACC believed that the threshold level of qualification normally expected for counsellors should be level 4 or level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). There did not appear to be a significant number of complaints from clients in relation to counsellors who were currently trained at level 4. ACC believed that a requirement above level 5 could deter people from training as counsellors in the future.

5.5 Following discussion, the Group agreed that it was important that any statutory regulation of psychotherapists and counsellors should be as inclusive of existing practitioners as possible. At the same time, standards needed to ensure public protection rather than reflecting aspirations for higher qualifications. The Group felt that a threshold level of qualification for counsellors of level 4 or level 5 would be an acceptable level.

5.6 The Group thanked the representatives of ACC for the presentation.

**Item 6.10/29 Differentiation between psychotherapists and counsellors
(report ref: PLG 16/10)**

- 6.1 The Group received a paper for discussion from the Executive and the tabled papers listed at item 2.
- 6.2 The Group considered the tabled paper from the Psychological Professions Alliance Group (PPAG), a group of professional bodies comprising the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies; British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy; the British Psychoanalytic Council; and the UK Council for Psychotherapy.
- 6.3 The tabled paper indicated that PPAG had reached a degree of consensus around a proposed model of regulation involving the adoption of three protected titles, with two threshold entry training levels. The model proposed that the titles should be: counsellor (with a threshold entry training level at NQF level 5); an 'adjectival titled counsellor' (with a threshold entry level at NQF level 7); and psychotherapist (with a threshold entry level at NQF level 7).
- 6.4 The Group noted that PPAG had not yet been able to agree whether the two proposed level 7 titles were interchangeable or differential. The parties in PPAG had agreed to attempt to delineate similarities and differences, if and where they existed. A PPAG working group had begun work on mapping out the issues and identifying areas of agreement and disagreement. PPAG believed that a model of regulation with three titles held the best prospects of a solution that could win support from the profession.
- 6.5 The Group agreed that stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in discussion about the issues which were being considered by PPAG. The Group agreed that its meeting on 15 November 2010 should be cancelled, to allow time for stakeholders in the profession to discuss the outstanding issues related to the Group's work. The Group's next meeting would therefore be held on 15 December 2010.
- 6.6 The Group noted that HPC would need to consider if any proposed model of regulation would be achievable under the Health Professions Order 2001. The Group noted that HPC would also need to consider the impact of any differentiation and whether any differentiation between protected titles could be justified.

The Group received the following papers for discussion from the Executive:

Item 7.10/30 HPC information for the Psychological Professions Alliance Group (report ref: PLG 17/10)

Item 8.10/31 Draft standards of proficiency from UK Council for Psychotherapy (report ref: PLG 18/10)

The Group noted the following papers:

Item 9.10/32 Consultation draft of standards of proficiency (report ref: PLG 19/10)

Item 10.10/33 Responses to the draft standards of proficiency from the consultation on the proposed statutory regulation of psychotherapists and counsellors (report ref: PLG 20/10)

Item 11.10/34 Generic standards of proficiency (report ref: PLG 21/10)

Item 12.10/35 Information for organisations invited to present to meetings of the Professional Liaison Group (report ref: PLG 22/10)

Item 13.10/36 Timetable and plan of activities (report ref: PLG 23/10)

Item 14.10/37 Any other business

14.1 There was no other business.

Item 15.10/38 Date of next and subsequent meetings

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

Wednesday 15 December 2010
Wednesday 2 February 2011

Chair

Date