

## **The Health Professions Council**

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MINUTES of the third meeting of the Applied Psychologists Standards of Proficiency Professional Liaison Group held at **1.30pm on Thursday 25 October 2007** at the Health Professions Council, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

### **Present:**

Professor J Lucas (Chairman)  
Professor M Adams  
Professor K Bryan  
Mr C Fife-Shaw  
Professor N Frederickson  
Professor P Kinderman  
Professor G Lindsay  
Miss G Pearson  
Dr G Powell  
Mrs B Stuart (for items 1-5 and part of item 6)

### **In attendance:**

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to Committees  
Ms T Fraser, Temporary Administrator/Secretary to Committees  
Mr M Guthrie, Policy Manager, Policy and Standards  
Ms R Tripp, Director of Policy and Standards

### **Item 1.07/13 Chairman's welcome and introduction**

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the third and final meeting of the Applied Psychologists Standards of Proficiency Professional Liaison Group (PLG). He thanked members for their work on the draft standards between meetings, and acknowledged the contribution of Helen Clark of the British Psychological Society (BPS).

### **Item 2.07/14 Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mr J Coe, Dr C Sellars and Professor D Waller.

### **Item 3.07/15 Approval of agenda**

- 3.1 The PLG approved the agenda, subject to considering the item on the draft standards before the item on English language requirements.

### **Item 4.07/16 Minutes of the Applied Psychologists Standards of Proficiency Professional Liaison Group held 12 October 2007**

- 4.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the second meeting of the Applied Psychologists Professional Liaison Group be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:
- Item 4.1: noting that in the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2007, there was ambiguity about the next review of the generic Standards of Proficiency. The Group agreed that it should be noted that there was good reason to consider bringing forward the next review date;
  - Item 6.4:
    - 1b.1 – change ‘need’ in the first line to ‘needed’;
    - 1.b.2 – clarify that there were three different ways of interpreting ‘consultancy’ in a psychologist context – as a direct intervention, an indirect intervention and a small business;
    - 2b.1 – remove the last sentence as it did not capture what the PLG had discussed;
  - Item 7.7: change the second bullet point to ‘ their clients (where children), were not coming to them directly...’; and
  - Item 7.10: change wording in third sentence to ‘...issues of power imbalance for clients as a result of restricted environments (e.g. prisoners)...’.

### **Item 5.07/17 Matters arising**

- 5.1 The group noted the matters arising were addressed in the papers on the agenda for the meeting.

## **Item 6.07/18 Draft standards**

- 6.1 The PLG received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager. The PLG noted that the Policy Manager had worked on the standards of proficiency in light of the comments from last meeting, and had worked with Helen Clark of the BPS to map the standards against pre-registration training requirements.
- 6.2 The Policy Manager pointed out that he had worked with Professor M Adams to bring across standards from the clinical psychologist draft standards document from the last meeting that had been omitted from the draft standards paper circulated before this meeting. As he went through the paper, he highlighted the areas where omissions were to be corrected. The PLG noted that the BPS supported the work of Professor Adams on the standards, and noted that the BPS had comments on the draft standards as a result of internal consultation, which they would give to the Policy Manager.

### **Action: MG/BPS – October 2007**

- 6.3 The PLG noted that BPS divisions were pleased to see domain specific standards, as these protected the public from psychologists practicing outside their area of specialty, and were happy with the way they were developing. The BPS did, however, have significant concerns regarding HPC's generic standards, which, because of language focused on health and social care, were felt to be compatible with the work and ethos of psychologists. Another member expressed concern that higher education institutions may have to make changes to their pre-registration psychology courses to reflect the generic standards, which would be inappropriate.
- 6.4 The PLG noted that it was not their role to look at options for generic standards. They discussed ways of addressing any issues with the generic standards, including by making the psychologists' standards as clear as possible, and including a preamble in the consultation document that discussed PLG members' concerns with the generic standards.
- 6.5 The Chairman suggested that the BPS put together a statement outlining their concerns with the generic standards and possible ways of making the standards inclusive of psychologists. He added that he personally would use this statement to advocate a discussion on the language used in the generic standards at a future Council meeting. He cautioned that he could not speak for other Council members on the PLG.
- 6.6 It was agreed that the BPS would draft a statement outlining psychologists' concerns with the generic standards and possible solutions

which they would send to the Policy Manager. The PLG noted that this statement would be included verbatim in any paper that the Education and Training Committee or Council received for discussion on the matter.

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- 6.7 The following comments were made by PLG members on individual aspects of the draft psychologists' standards of proficiency:
- 1a.1 clinical psychology bullet points one and two 'understand the power imbalance...' and 'understand the complex ethical and legal issues...' also applied to counselling, educational, forensic and sport and exercise psychologists;  
  
educational psychology bullet point one 'understand their duty of care with regard to safeguarding children' also applied to clinical and sport and exercise psychologists;  
  
references to children should be accompanied with 'young people' as this was a specific legal category (which was particularly relevant for educational psychologists);
  - 1a.2 educational psychology bullet point one 'diversity and life opportunities' should be deleted. A standard in similar terms was already included in standard 3a.1;
  - 1a.8 clinical and counselling psychology bullet point one 'be able to manage the physical, psychological and emotional...' should be made a standard for all psychologists;
  - 1b.1 move clinical and educational psychology bullet point one 'understand the role of the educational/clinical psychologist across a range...' to section 3;  
  
delete bullet points two and three under educational psychologist, as these were implicit in the generic standards;  
  
note that the counselling psychology bullet point one '...understand therapy from the perspective of the client' could be made clearer, but leave it as drafted for the consultation paper;
  - 1b.3 align wording of bullet point one 'be able to....teaching and training for staff..' across clinical, educational and forensic psychology;

clinical psychology bullet point three ‘...communicating feedback to clients’ was about the particular skill of providing sensitive feedback, and should apply to all psychologists;

clinical psychology bullet point four ‘...communicate ideas...to specialist and non-specialist audiences’ should apply to all psychologists;

clinical psychology bullet point five should be changed to ‘*be able to provide psychological opinion and advice in formal settings as appropriate*’ and could possibly apply to all psychologists;

reorder wording of counselling psychology bullet point one ‘understand creativity and artistry in the use of language...’ to clarify meaning, and change ‘understanding’ to ‘understand’ in bullet two;

1b.4 counselling psychology bullet point one ‘be able to initiate...a purposeful therapeutic alliance’ also applied to clinical psychology;

2a.1 the PLG discussed whether the standard included for occupational, forensic and sport and exercise psychology ‘be able to establish...interventions’ was specific enough. It was agreed that this standard would be moved to standard 2b.2 and made generic for all psychologists;

2a.2 two omitted standards on formal assessment to be put back in clinical psychology, and also included in educational and occupational psychology;

the group discussed whether a standard on ecological validity for occupational psychologists would be helpful. The group also discussed whether the first bullet point for educational psychologists could be reworded;

delete health psychology bullet point one ‘...assess requests for consultancy’ as this is covered in 2b.4;

2a.4 delete bullet point one ‘be able to interpret assessment methods’ from clinical and forensic psychology;

add ‘be able to develop psychological formulations...’ to clinical and educational psychology;

the group discussed whether counselling psychology bullet point two 'be able to critically evaluate...' could be simplified and agreed that the standard should be moved to 3a.1;

delete sport and exercise psychology bullet point one '..assess requests for consultancy' as it is covered elsewhere;

- 2b.1 change generic for psychologists bullet point one to 'be able to initiate, develop, *design* and conduct...';

delete clinical psychology bullet point four, '...identify analyse and evaluate research evidence' as it is implicit in the generic standards;

add to occupational psychology 'be able to use psychological theory to guide solutions for individuals and organisations';

- 2b.2 two omitted standards were to be put back in clinical psychology;

clinical psychology:

bullet points two, three and four apply to all psychologists, bullet point eight 'be able to use clinical and research skills to work with clients...' applies to all psychologists. However, the group agreed that 'clinical' be substituted with 'professional';

educational psychology:

bullet point three applies to all psychologists: take out 'educational' and add 'evidence-based' in front of 'theoretical models';

- 2b.3 remove 'be able to plan applications...' from forensic and occupational psychology, as this was implicit in the generic standards;

remove 'be able to plan consultancy' from health and sport and exercise psychology, as it was covered elsewhere;

- 2b.4 change clinical psychology bullet point four to read 'be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions, including therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy, based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy'. This standard also applies to educational psychologists;

- 2b.5 include a standard for occupational psychology: 'be able to record and handle commercially sensitive information';

- 2c.1 clinical psychology bullet point one included the concept of 'formulation', a term which was not always used in all disciplines. This standard should also be included for educational psychology;
- counselling psychology and health psychology bullet points one were implied in the generics or covered elsewhere so should be deleted;
- 2c.2 clinical, counselling and education psychology bullet point one 'recognise the role and value of supervision...' remove mention of 'context';
- 3a.1 clinical psychology:  
bullet point four ' understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention' applied to all psychologists;
- the group also discussed ensuring consistency in this area between the different disciplines;
- health psychology bullet point three change to 'understand psychological models relating to:...';
- sport and exercise psychology:  
bullet point one change to 'cognition *and* learning and perception'; and  
bullet point three delete 'interpersonal and communication skills', add 'and competition' to 'co-operation' and delete 'competence' and add 'exercise and physical activity'.
- 6.8 The Policy Manager agreed to incorporate the changes for the draft of the standards that would go out for consultation.

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#### **Item 7.07/19 English language requirements**

- 7.1 The PLG received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager. The PLG was invited to discuss the appropriate level of language proficiency requirements for each of the applied psychology disciplines, and to provide a clear rationale as to why the level they recommended was necessary.
- 7.2 A view was expressed that the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level should be 8 for clinical, educational and counseling

- psychologists, because language was the primary tool of intervention. Very specific, nuanced and complex personal and cultural information was collected by psychologists on patients, which formed the basis of intervention. Higher level language skills were needed for this than IELTS level 7.
- 7.3 The PLG noted that 12 other professions, including arts therapists (who also used language as the tool of intervention) required IELTS level 7 for registration. The only profession with IELTS level 8 was speech and language therapy.
- 7.4 The PLG noted that IELTS level 8 was deemed necessary for speech and language therapists because language was the core occupational skill. This meant that registration required phonetic and linguistic understanding: not only did speech and language therapists require a complex understanding of how to use language; they also needed to understand the structure of language.
- 7.5 The PLG discussed circumstances when psychologists did need an advanced understanding of language:
- educational psychologists needed to be able to assess children's language development;
  - some psychologists specialised in language disorders such as dysphasia; and
  - psychologists who administered psychometric testing needed to understand complex verbal answers.
- 7.6 The PLG discussed whether the level of language required of psychologists was contained in the standards of proficiency and therefore did not require a separate test. It was also noted that the standards did not specify English as the language of competence, and that it would not be possible to do this because of European Mutual Recognition.
- 7.7 The Policy Manager agreed that the consultation document would include a discussion on the language requirement, and a question on whether IELTS level 7 should be the requirement for all psychologists, or whether some domains should require IELTS level 8.

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### **Item 8.07/20 Work Plan**

- 8.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a copy of the workplan to note from the Policy Manager.
- 8.2 The PLG noted that this would be the last meeting of the Group. The comments from the meeting would be incorporated into the draft standards, with the document issued for consultation from November 2007 to February 2008. (The Department of Health would release a separate consultation document on the proposed statutory regulation of applied psychologists at the same time). The Policy Manager would provide PLG members with an update two months into the consultation period.
- 8.3 No prescribed questions would be included in the consultation document, aside from the question on language requirements. The PLG noted that respondents would be free to provide comments on both the profession-specific standards of proficiency and the generic standards. It would be made clear, however, that the generic standards were not currently being reviewed, but that the comments would be logged and used in the next review.
- 8.4 The PLG noted that the Education and Training Committee and the Council would consider the consultation responses and the finalised draft standards at a meeting on 20 February 2008, and, once finalised, the standards would be published.
- 8.5 The PLG noted that there had been no occupational psychologist in the membership of the group and that appropriate consideration should be given to the constitution of any future PLGs that it was necessary to establish.

### **Item 9.07/21 British Psychological Society drafts**

- 9.1 The PLG received a paper for information from the Policy Manager. The paper included draft standards of proficiency for each of the disciplines. The drafts had been circulated by the BPS to the divisions which represented each branch of psychology within the BPS.

### **Item 10.07/22 Any other business**

- 10.1 The Director of Policy and Standards informed the PLG that a meeting had been held between HPC and BPS employees on the project plan to implement statutory regulation.

10.2 The PLG thanked the Chairman for his work and the Chairman thanked members for their positive and constructive contributions and their work outside meetings.

**Chairman:**

**Date:**