

Education and Training Committee, 10 March 2010

## **Consultation on amendment to the standards of proficiency for health psychologists**

### **Executive summary and recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice.

A consultation was held between 9 November 2007 and 8 February 2008 on draft standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists. The standards were subsequently agreed by the Committee and Council and were effective from 1 July 2009.

Since the publication of the standards, we have received feedback to suggest that one of the domain specific standards for health psychologists may potentially be confusing and is not a threshold standard. We are proposing to consult on a minor amendment to this standard.

#### **Decision**

The Committee is invited to:

- agree and recommend to the Council that a consultation should be held on a minor amendment to the standards of proficiency for health psychologists (as outlined in the appended consultation document); and
- agree and recommend to Council the text of the appended consultation document (subject to any minor editing changes).

#### **Background information**

Consultation document on proposed standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists:

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001FA4Appliedpsychologists-Standardsofproficiencyconsultationdocument.pdf>

#### **Resource implications**

The resource implications include mailing of the consultation document and production of a consultation responses document. These have been included within the draft Policy and Standards workplan for 2010-2011.

## Financial implications

The financial implications include laying out and publication of the consultation document and mailing of the consultation document to relevant stakeholders. These have been included within the draft Policy and Standards budget for 2010-2011.

## Appendices

None

## Date of paper

25 February 2010

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2008-09-11	a	POL	PPR	Student FtP draft ethical guidance cover paper	Draft DD: None	Internal RD: None

## **Consultation on amendment to the standards of proficiency for health psychologists**

### **Introduction**

We are consulting on a suggested amendment to the domain-specific standard for health psychologists in the standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists.

### **About us**

We are the Health Professions Council (HPC). We are a regulator, and we were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their professional skills and behaviour.

We currently regulate 14 professions:

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists
- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Speech and language therapists

### **Standards of proficiency**

The standards of proficiency are threshold standards for the safe and effective practice of each of the professions we regulate. Their primary role is as standards for entry to the Register. They describe the minimum skills and knowledge necessary to become registered.

We visit education and training providers to ensure that they meet our standards of education and training and that their programmes allow their students to meet the standards of proficiency. Once a programme is approved, someone successfully completing that programme is eligible to apply for registration.

The standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists were drafted in 2007 in preparation for their statutory regulation. A consultation on the draft standards was held between November 2007 and February 2008. The standards were subsequently agreed and became effective on 1 July 2009 when our Register for practitioner psychologists opened.

The standards of proficiency are divided into generic standards which apply across all of the professions we regulate and profession specific standards which apply to an individual profession. The standards for practitioner psychologists also contain domain specific standards which apply to a specific domain of practice. The seven domains are:

- Clinical psychology;
- Counselling psychology;
- Educational psychology;
- Forensic psychology;
- Health psychology;
- Occupational psychology; and
- Sport and Exercise psychology.

We are consulting on an amendment to the domain specific standards for health psychologists which is contained within the profession specific standards for practitioner psychologists.

### **About this consultation**

Following responses we received during the consultation held in 2007/2008 the following domain-specific standard was added for health psychologists:

- be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy, including the use of cognitive behavioural therapy

We have subsequently received feedback which suggests that the phrase ‘...including the use of cognitive behavioural therapy’ is confusing and implies that the therapeutic techniques used by health psychologists must include cognitive behavioural therapy, rather than cognitive behavioural therapy simply being an exemplar. We have also received feedback to suggest that education and training providers may not be able to meet the requirement specifically around cognitive behavioural therapy as it is not incorporated within all education and training.

However, the feedback we have received has suggested that the first part of the standard ‘be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions...’ is a necessary threshold standard.

### **Our proposals**

Whilst we try to avoid making frequent changes to the standards, we keep them under regular review to ensure that they remain relevant and do not unnecessarily act as a barrier to education and training providers and others.

Our primary consideration when setting, amending or removing any standard is whether it is necessary for threshold safe and effective practice.

In light of the feedback we have received, we are proposing that this standard should be amended.

The amended standard, if agreed, would read:

- be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy

### **About this document**

We would welcome your response to this consultation. In particular, we are seeking the views of stakeholders on whether the standard as it currently reads is necessary for safe and effective practise as a health psychologist.

This consultation will put our proposals before a range of stakeholders including professional bodies, higher education institutions and others with an interest in the standards for health psychologists.

You can download further copies of this document from our website or you can contact us if you would like us to send you a copy.

### **Please contact us to request a copy of this document in an alternative format, or in Welsh.**

We are consulting for 12 weeks in accordance with the guidance set out in the Government Code of Practice on Consultation.

The deadline for responses to this consultation is **[Date / Month / 2010]**.

We are striving to improve our consultation process to ensure the best policy outcomes. You can find more information on our consultation process and contact details to tell us how we can improve our consultations on our website: [www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/about/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/about/).

### **How to respond**

Please send your response to:

Standards of proficiency consultation – health psychologists  
Policy and Standards Department  
Health Professions Council  
Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London  
SE11 4BU

You may also email responses to [consultation@hpc-uk.org](mailto:consultation@hpc-uk.org) or send a fax to +44 (0)20 7820 9684.

Please note that we are not able to accept responses by telephone or in person.

We will publish a summary of the responses we receive to the consultation and the decisions we have taken as a result on our website.

If you would prefer your response not to be made public, please indicate this when you respond.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna van der Gaag". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Anna van der Gaag  
President