

Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group (PLG)  
15 December 2010

Timetable and plan of activities

Executive summary and recommendations

**Introduction**

The timetable and plan of activities for the work of the PLG has been updated to highlight the activities to date and the broad plans for the concluding meetings in December 2010 and February 2011.

This paper has also been updated to describe the possible next steps.

**Decision**

This paper is to note; no decision is required.

**Background information**

None

**Resource implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Appendices**

- List of presentations

**Date of paper**

2 December 2010

## **Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group (PLG) Timetable and plan of activities – updated**

This document has been updated to describe the activities undertaken by the PLG and to describe the plans for the concluding meetings in December 2010 and February 2011.

### **1. PLG sponsor**

The Council

### **2. Mission statement / terms of reference**

To further explore and to attempt to resolve the following issues in order to inform the conclusions of the HPC Council:

- Differentiation in the structure of the Register between psychotherapists and counsellors.
- Differentiation in the structure of the Register between those qualified to work with children and young people and those qualified to work with adults.
- Standards of proficiency for psychotherapists and counsellors.
- Standards of education and training – the threshold level or levels of qualification required for entry to the Register.

[N.B: The HPC would be required to consult on the standards of proficiency and the threshold level(s) of qualification for entry to the Register prior to final decisions being made in these areas and prior to the opening of the Register.]

### **3. Planned meetings of the PLG**

The following sets out the meetings of the PLG and the activities that have been undertaken to date or that are planned for the remaining meetings.

- **12 May 2010**

At this meeting the PLG discussed its progress to date and discussed its ongoing plan of activities.

- **30 September 2010**

The PLG considered presentations from the Place2Be and the Association of Child Psychotherapists and considered a paper discussing the issues salient to the question of whether the Register should differentiate between those qualified to work with children and young people and those qualified to work with adults.

- **19 October 2010**

The PLG considered a presentation from the Association of Christian Counsellors and considered papers on the issues of the structure of the Register, differentiation and the standards of proficiency. The following meeting was cancelled to allow ongoing discussions in the field to continue.

- **15 December 2010**

At this meeting the PLG will be considering its final presentation from Youth Access which will focus on the children and young people part of its terms of reference.

However, it is intended that the primary focus of this meeting will be moving towards reaching conclusions about the structure of the Register and the standards of proficiency.

- **2 February 2011**

This meeting concludes the PLG's workplan.

By the end of the meeting it is intended that the group should attempt to agree and make recommendations to the HPC Council about all the areas within its terms of reference.

The decisions / conclusions to be made and included in those recommendations are as follows:

- To agree in principle, as far as possible, the draft standards of proficiency (recognising that further work and further iterations are likely to be necessary and that a consultation would be held prior to the opening of any statutory register to shape the standards further).
- To agree the structure of the Register including agreeing whether the Register should differentiate between psychotherapists and counsellors and in the ways described in section seven of this paper.
- To agree in principle the threshold level or levels for entry to the Register (recognising that this will be subject to future consideration in light of the finalised standards and subject to a consultation held prior to the opening of any statutory register).
- To make final conclusions with regards the variety of issues raised about differentiation between those qualified to work with children and young people and those qualified to work with adults.

The exact papers considered by the Group will be dictated by the discussion at the December 2010 meeting.

- **May 2011 – HPC Council meeting**

Report to the Council. This will be drafted by the HPC Executive.

#### **4. Ongoing timetable**

The decisions at the May 2011 Council meeting would then inform the content and timing of any further work, for example, to further refine the standards of proficiency in light of these decisions.

The HPC would need to publicly consult on the standards of proficiency and threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register prior to the opening of any Register.

However, the final decision about regulation is one for the Government and, ultimately, for the UK and Scottish parliaments. At the moment we do not know whether the present administration is minded to take forward the 2007 White Paper policy that psychotherapists and counsellors should become statutorily regulated. At this stage it is unlikely that the HPC would seek to undertake further substantive work until such time as a more formal decision has been made by Government about how it wishes to proceed in this area. The timing of any further work would therefore be dictated by that decision and any future legislative timetable. This is, however, a decision for the HPC Council to make at its meeting in May 2011.

If a decision was taken to proceed with regulation the UK Department of Health would be required to undertake and publish a regulatory impact assessment before consulting upon the necessary legislation – a Section 60 Order under the Health Act 1999. The legislation would then need to be agreed at Westminster and in the Scottish Parliament.

Appendix – List of presentations

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Issues to be covered (not exhaustive)</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
1	Place2be	Psychotherapy / counselling  Service provider  Employer	Service provider of psychotherapy / counselling for children and young people.	Children and young people differentiation	Sept 2010
2	Association of Child Psychotherapists	Child and Adolescent psychotherapy	Specific group whom it has been argued should be separately recognised in the Register. Competent authority for child and adolescent psychotherapy in the UK.	Children and young people differentiation	Sept 2010
3	Youth Access	Membership body for service providers providing information, advice and counselling for children and young people	Youth access argues that the Register should differentiate to reflect the skills required for counsellors to work with children and young people.	Children and young people differentiation	December 2010

Appendix – List of presentations

4	Association of Christian Counsellors	Counselling Professional body and education provider Voluntary sector Faith based services	Information and views on a range of subjects, particularly about the threshold level of entry and standards of practice related to voluntary sector counselling.	Differentiation Threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register Standards of proficiency	Oct 2010

**The presentation at this meeting will complete the programme of presentations. No other presentations are planned.**

Please note that timings / other details included in this table may be subject to change.