

Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group (PLG)  
2 February 2011

PLG workplan

Executive summary and recommendations

**Introduction**

This meeting is the last scheduled meeting of the PLG.

This short paper outlines the outstanding issues to be considered at this meeting and the possible next steps.

**Decision**

This paper is to note; no decision is required.

**Background information**

None

**Resource implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Appendices**

None

**Date of paper**

24 January 2011

## **PLG workplan**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document has been updated to describe the outstanding decisions / conclusions to be reached by the group at this meeting. This meeting concludes the PLG's current workplan.

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

- 2.1 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. Outstanding decisions**

- 3.1 By the end of this 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.
- 3.2 The decisions / conclusions to be made and included in those recommendations are as follows:
- To agree the structure of the Register including agreeing whether the Register should differentiate between psychotherapists and counsellors and in the ways described in the papers considered at this meeting.
    - At the last meeting, the PLG agreed in principle to differentiate between a counsellor at entry to the Register at 'level 5' and at 'level 7'.
  - 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 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).
  - The PLG has previously discussed setting thresholds at level 5 and level 7; the group is invited to consider this formally at this meeting.
- 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 PLG is invited to discuss and make final decisions about this area at this meeting.

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

- 4.1 A report will be written by the HPC Executive following the conclusion of the PLG's workplan for discussion by the HPC Council at its meeting on 12 May 2011.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.