

**unconfirmed**

**The Health Professions Council**

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MINUTES of the first meeting of the Applied Psychologists Standards of Proficiency Professional Liaison Group held at **10.30am on Tuesday 4 September 2007** at Avonmouth House, 6 Avonmouth Street, London, SE1 6NX.

**Present:**

Professor J Lucas (Chairman)

Professor M Adams

Professor K Bryan

Mr J Coe

Mr C Fife-Shaw

Professor P Kinderman

Professor G Lindsay

Miss G Pearson

Mrs B Stuart

Professor D Waller

**In attendance:**

Mr M Chapman, Temporary Secretary to Committees

Mr M Guthrie, Policy Manager, Policy and Standards

Ms N O'Sullivan, Secretary to Council

Mr P Thompson, Parliamentary Agent, Bircham Dyson Bell

Mrs R Tripp, Director of Policy and Standards

Dr A van der Gaag, President, Health Professions Council (HPC)

**Item 1.07/01 Chairman's welcome and introduction**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the first meeting of the first meeting of the Applied Psychologists Standards of Proficiency Professional Liaison Group. He also welcomed members of the public present in the public gallery. He noted the presence of Dr G Powell and Dr E Campbell from the British Psychological Society (BPS) and invited them to contribute to

the discussions. He requested that, in line with the HPC guidance for non-members attending meetings which had been distributed, contributions to the discussions should be made through the Chairman. The Chairman noted the presence of Mr P Thompson, Parliamentary Agent, Bircham Dyson Bell.

- 1.2 The Chairman provided a brief overview of the Group's aims, its remit, and the timetable for completion of the work of the PLG. The outcome of this work would result in a set of recommendations which would be considered by the HPC Council and which would be subject to public consultation.
- 1.3 The HPC President noted that she was not a member of the PLG and that she was attending the meeting in her capacity as HPC President. She welcomed all those attending the meeting and noted that they shared a common purpose of maintaining high professional standards, promoting good professional practice and protecting the public.

#### **Item 2.07/02 Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Dr C Sellars and Mr M Seale (HPC Chief Executive and Registrar).

#### **Item 3.07/03 Approval of agenda**

- 3.1 The Group approved the agenda.

#### **Item 4.07/04 Background and context**

- 4.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager.
- 4.2 The Group noted that revised generic Standards of Proficiency had been agreed by the Council in May 2007 following a public consultation and would be effective from 1 November 2007. The primary function of the standards was to set threshold standards for entry to the register. It was recognised that as registrants progressed in their careers they were likely to become more specialised and would not practice in all the areas covered by the Standards. However throughout their careers registrants should continue to practice within their scope of practice.
- 4.3 The Group noted that the language of the Standards of Proficiency must be consistent with their role of setting out threshold entry level standards. Consequently the standards needed to be expressed in expectational terms so that a person who was not yet on the register could comply with them.

- 4.4 The Group noted that, in drafting the standards of proficiency for applied psychologists, the PLG would need to consider the most appropriate approach in order to ensure that the standards were relevant and applicable across the applied psychology disciplines. In particular the PLG would wish to consider whether any standards which were particular to specific applied psychology disciplines were necessary.
- 4.5 The Group noted that many of the registrants who belonged to the 13 professions regulated by the HPC did not have direct interaction with patients. The language and scope of the standards included these registrants.
- 4.6 The Group noted that the Executive had been advised that the Group should focus on the outcome achieved by the standard set in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 4.7 The Group noted that there were practising psychologists who were not covered by the 7 titles listed in the 2004 Department of Health consultation document 'Applied Psychology: Enhancing public protection: Proposals for the statutory regulation of psychologists'. The Group noted that the resolution of this issue was not within its remit and that the BPS was engaged in discussions with the Department of Health about this issue.
- 4.8 The Group noted that the HPC Education and Training Committee would consider and make a recommendation to HPC Council regarding the appropriate threshold level of qualification for entry to the Applied Psychologists part of the register at its meeting in September 2007. Any decision taken at that meeting would be subject to ratification by the HPC Council and a public consultation.
- 4.9 The group noted that whilst the setting of the threshold level and the establishment of standards of proficiency were related issues, the threshold level was being considered separately and was not within the group's remit. The threshold level was derived from what was necessary to achieve the standards of proficiency.
- 4.10 The Group noted that currently the threshold level for entry to the BPS register was set at three years postgraduate level study. The BPS was concerned that the entry standards agreed by the HPC would be lower than the current standards. The Group noted that entry level standards had to be justified and that in the past the HPC had sought to respect the standards of the professions it regulated.

### **Item 5.07/05 Applied Psychologists – International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Requirements**

- 5.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager.
- 5.2 The Group noted that applicants for entry to the register, who did not have mutual recognition rights under European Legislation and for whom English was not their first language, were required to achieve an overall score in the academic test of the International Language Testing System (IELTS) of at least 7.0. A standard of IELTS 8 had been set for Speech and Language Therapists. This was in recognition of the fact that language was a core competency for the practice of Speech and Language Therapy.
- 5.3 The Group noted that the standard required would differ according to the area of psychology in which the registrant practised. Certain specialties could practice at IELTS 7 however there were those who could need standard 8. The Group noted that each group would be reviewed on a case by case basis and that the Executive would seek legal advice regarding this issue.

**Action: MG – by 25 October 2007**

### **Item 6.07/06 Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements**

- 6.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager.
- 6.2 The Group noted the benchmarks for clinical psychology produced by the QAA and QAA Scotland and also a document which mapped the benchmarks (QAA) against the generic standards.
- 6.3 The Group agreed that the undergraduate benchmark statement for psychology should be made available to the Group as a reference document.

**Action: MG – 12 October 2007**

## **Item 7.07/07 Applied Psychologists Standards of Proficiency: First Draft**

- 7.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager.
- 7.2 The Group noted that the draft document entitled standards of proficiency first draft incorporated information gained from the mapping of the QAA benchmark for clinical psychology to the standards of proficiency. This was a first working draft. The Group noted that this was a good place to start the work being undertaken.
- 7.3 The Group noted concerns that some practising psychologists could not meet some of the threshold standards but noted that other HPC registrants were practising outside a health and social care setting and were able to meet the generic standards of proficiency.
- 7.4 The Group noted that it was not within its remit to change the generic standards but that it could address these concerns when drafting the specific standards. There was a possibility that a footnote could be added to the generic standards.
- 7.5 The Group noted that the Council had agreed to a rolling cycle of 5 yearly reviews of the standards of proficiency however consideration could be given to changing the period of time between reviews. The HPC Executive kept a record of all concerns raised regarding the standards for consideration during the review. The Group could make recommendations regarding the generic standards which could be considered as part of a review.
- 7.6 The Group noted that further drafts of the standards for each discipline would be produced for the next meeting.

**Action: MG by 12 October 2007**

## **Item 8.07/08 Work Plan**

- 8.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for information from the Policy Manager.
- 8.2 The Group noted that the workplan did not make reference to psychologists who held a practising certificate but who did not form part of the 7 groups which had been identified in the 2004 Department of Health consultation document 'Applied Psychology: Enhancing public protection: Proposals for the statutory regulation of psychologists'.

- 8.3 The Group noted the need to include all those who needed to be regulated within the scope of regulation but to exclude those who did not need to be regulated and who would be negatively impacted by regulation. The Group agreed that there was a need to reassure academics who did not need to register that they should not do so. The Group agreed that the Executive should find a form of words to be added to the cover sheet for the workplan to acknowledge this.

**Action: MG – 12 October 2007**

**Item 9.07/09 Generic Standards of Proficiency with Standards for Art Therapists and Clinical Scientists, for illustration**

- 9.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for information from the Policy Manager.

**Item 10.07/10 Any other business**

- 10.1 The Group noted that it was the title and not the function of a profession that was regulated and that therefore some individuals could choose to avoid regulation by changing their title.

**Item 11.07/11 Date and time of next meeting**

- 11.1 10.30am on Friday 12 October 2007 at the Evangelical Alliance, 186 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BT.
- 11.2 The Chairman thanked all those who attended the meeting.