

**Health Professions Council**  
**Council meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

**Standards of proficiency for applied psychologists**

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

**Introduction**

The recent white paper, 'Trust, Assurance and Safety – The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' said:

*'Psychologists, psychotherapists and counsellors will be regulated by the Health Professions Council, following that Council's rigorous process of assessing their regulatory needs and ensuring that its system is capable of accommodating them. This will be the first priority for future regulation.'*

The Department of Health in England previously consulted on proposals that HPC should regulate Applied Psychologists from March to June 2005.

The Department of Health in England has indicated that applied psychologists will be regulated by HPC.

**Professional Liaison Group (PLG)**

The Executive proposes that a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) should be established to draft the standards of proficiency for applied psychologists. This will build upon previous work undertaken by the British Psychological Society in producing draft standards of proficiency.

The attached workplan outlines the work of the proposed PLG. At their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007, the Education and Training Committee agreed and recommended to the Council that a PLG should be set up and agreed the attached workplan. The Committee also passed a resolution that the chair of the Committee may approve the draft standards for consultation via chair's action.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the Committee recommended Professor Lucas as chair of the PLG.

Council members (including alternates) were invited to register their interest in sitting on the PLG prior to the Council meeting. Council members are invited to express their interest by Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007. The membership of the PLG would be agreed by the chair shortly after this date.

**Timescales and approval mechanisms**

The timescale detailed in the attached plan assumes that the applied psychologists part of the Register will not open before April 2008 and that the PLG will not conclude its work in less

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<sup>1</sup> The Committee agreed that comments should be sought from committee members shortly prior to chair's action being taken. Please see overleaf.

than three meetings. This timescale may change dependent upon a number of factors including the passage of the necessary legislation. In the workplan it is proposed that the chair of the PLG should agree any changes to the timetable.

Given the tight timescale, and the requirement to consult, it is not possible to seek the approval of Council and of the Education and Training Committee in the normal way at their meetings, prior to the consultation of draft standards, and prior to their publication.

It is instead proposed in the workplan that:

- the draft standards should **not** come back to the Council prior to consultation but should instead be agreed by chair's action of the chair of the Education and Training Committee (please see page 1); and
- the Education and Training Committee and Council should be asked to ratify the standards for publication, following consultation, electronically.

### **Decision**

The Council is invited to agree:

- to establish a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) to draft the standards of proficiency for applied psychologists;
- the contents of the attached workplan;
- that Professor Lucas should chair the PLG; and
- to pass a resolution that the standards can be approved for consultation by chair's action of the chair of the Education and Training Committee, without reference to Council.

### **Background information**

Article 5 (2) of the Health Professions Order 2001 says:

*The Council shall from time to time—*

*(a) establish the standards of proficiency necessary to be admitted to the different parts of the register being the standards it considers necessary for safe and effective practice under that part of the register.*

Article 3 (14) requires that the Council must consult each time before establishing any standards or giving any guidance.

In conducting consultations, HPC follows the Cabinet Office's code of practice on consultations which recommends a minimum period of 12 weeks.

### **Resource implications**

- Organising PLG meetings
- Research and writing of papers for PLG

**Financial implications**

- Producing consultation document
- Type-setting and publication of new standards
- Venues for meetings
- Attendance fee and expenses for Council members
- Reimbursement of expenses for non-Council members

These financial implications are accounted for in the 2007/2008 budget.

**Background papers**

None

**Appendices**

None

**Date of paper**

25<sup>th</sup> June 2007

# **Standards of proficiency for Psychologists – Professional Liaison Group (PLG)**

## **Workplan**

### **1. PLG sponsor**

The Council

### **2. PLG Mission Statement / Terms of reference**

To draft the standards of proficiency for psychologists. The PLG should use the draft standards of proficiency produced by the British Psychological Society as the starting point for its work.

The PLG should consider all relevant information in drafting the standards which might include:

- national occupational standards for psychologists;
- standards produced by the British Psychological Society; and
- the subject benchmark statement for Psychology produced by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

### **3. Meetings**

The PLG should conclude its work in no more than three meetings.

### **4. Membership**

The PLG should consist of up to ten members. Membership should be drawn from amongst the following groups:

- council members – registrant and lay;
- representatives from the British Psychological Society and other representative organisations;
- representatives from education providers; and
- representatives from patient organisations.

The PLG should be chaired by a member of Council. The Chair will be responsible for agreeing the exact membership of the PLG.

## **5. Timetable and outline of activities**

The following is a draft timetable for the PLG's work and includes an outline of the group's activities at each meeting. (Meeting dates of the PLG have been provisionally agreed and are shown).

The plan assumes that the work will not be concluded in less than three meetings and that an applied psychologists part of the Register will not open before 1 April 2008. As this date is subject to change, any subsequent alterations to the timetable will be agreed with the chair.

### **12<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

- Education and Training Committee meeting – recommendation of workplan to Council

### **5<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

- Council meeting – approval of workplan

### **4<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

- 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of PLG early September
  - First draft of standards
  - Legal context and background to the standards
  - Other standards and frameworks (e.g. mapping of existing standards of proficiency against QAA benchmark statements).

### **12<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting late September/ early October
  - Second draft of standards

### **25<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting October
  - Final draft of standards
- Standards to be approved for consultation via chair's action of the chair of the Education and Training Committee following this meeting.

### **November, December 2007 to January 2008**

- Public consultation

## **February 2008**

- Writing of consultation responses and revision of draft standards following consultation. Decisions arising from the consultation will take place with the agreement of the PLG chair and in liaison with the PLG membership.
- Electronic ratification of new standards by the Education and Training Committee and by Council.
- Laying out and publication of new standards in advance of the opening date of the Register.