

## Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group

### Minutes of the seventh meeting of the Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group held as follows:-

**Date:** Thursday 30 September 2010

**Time:** 10:30 am

**Venue:** The Studio, Dominion Theatre, 268-269 Tottenham Court Road, London  
W1T 7AQ

**Present:** Carmen Joanne Ablack  
Sally Aldridge  
Malcolm Allen  
Fiona Ballantine Dykes  
Jonathan Coe  
Mick Cooper  
Brian Magee  
Steve Pilling (for items 1-5 inclusive and item 8)  
Shirley Reynolds  
Nick Turner  
Diane Waller (Chair)

### In attendance:

Mr O Ammar, Acting Director of Education  
Ms N Cooper, The Place2Be  
Ms E Gayle, Media and Public Relations Manager  
Mr M Guthrie, Director of Policy and Standards  
Ms L Hart, Secretary to Council  
Ms B Tydeman, Chair, Association of Child Psychotherapists  
Ms C Urwin, Policy Manager  
Mr P Wilson, The Place2Be  
Ms B Youell, Association of Child Psychotherapists

### **Item 1.10/10 Apologies for absence**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mary Clark-Glass, Peter Fonagy (Steve Pilling attending instead), Julian Lousada (Malcolm Allen attending instead), Jeff Lucas, Linda Matthews (Shirley Reynolds attending instead), Jean McMinn, Eileen Thornton and Annie Turner.

### **Item 2.10/11 Approval of agenda**

- 2.1 The Group approved the agenda. Later in the meeting, it was agreed that the second presentation (from the Association of Child Psychotherapists) should follow immediately after the first presentation from The Place2Be.

### **Item 3.10/12 Minutes of the Professional Liaison Group meeting held on 12 May 2010 (report ref: PLG 7/10)**

- 3.1 The Group agreed that the minutes of the sixth meeting of the Professional Liaison Group should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **Item 4.10/13 Matters arising**

- 4.1 There were no matters arising.

### **Item 5.10/14 Presentation from The Place2Be**

- 5.1 The Group received a presentation from Peter Wilson and Niki Cooper of The Place2Be. Peter Wilson outlined the background to the establishment of "The Place2Be", their work in a school setting as opposed to a clinical setting and the recruitment and training for the organisation. The presenters emphasised the difference in skills required for working with children and, noted that whilst they do recruit counsellors that have worked mainly with adults, the employees then undertake specialist training (66 hours over two years) in order to acquire those skills required to work safely and effectively with children.

5.2 With regards to the structure of the Register were HPC to regulate psychotherapists and counsellors, the Place2Be expressed a preference for an annotation on the Register for those with the skills to work with children since it recognised the specific skills but would continue to allow the organisation to recruit from a diverse pool and offer the specialist training in-house.

5.3 During the course of discussion, the following views were expressed:-

- That “child and adolescent psychotherapists” should have a protected title since their qualifications are established although this is not the same for “child counsellors”;
- That it could be problematic trying to capture the thorough training received to be a child psychotherapist by a simple annotation on the Register;
- That by creating a separate protected title for child and adolescent psychotherapists, this could take away the flexibility that organisations like The Place2Be are able to take advantage of in their recruitment of counsellors;
- There was concern that the current standards of proficiency are not written in a way to ensure that anyone working with children has the training and understanding of the legislation and developmental needs;
- That were we to protect the title “child and adolescent psychotherapist” then this should sit alongside the titles “psychotherapist” and “counsellor” rather than being a sub set of “psychotherapist;”
- That in looking at the structure of the Register, it was important to ensure that the needs of practitioners were also met;
- The need to put in place standards of proficiency which relate to all professionals working therapeutically with children since certain skills are required which all psychotherapists and counsellors may not have;
- That if the protected title “child and adolescent psychotherapist” was a subsection of “psychotherapist” on the Register, separate standards would be required. However, this would need to be considered carefully on a feasibility basis;

- That it was only possible to regulate those titles which already exist and so the grounds did not currently exist to protect the title “child counsellor;”
- That there could be unintended consequences were the title of “child and adolescent psychotherapist” to be protected and so it was important that full and proper consideration was given to this;

5.4 The Place2Be concluded their presentation emphasising that whatever conclusions were reached on this topic it was necessary to ensure that this did not adversely affect the ability of service providers to recruit and train psychotherapists and counsellors to provide services to children and young people.

The PLG agreed that the agenda should be reordered in order to receive the presentation from the Association of Child Psychotherapists next.

**Item 8.10/17 Presentation from the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP) (report ref: PLG 10/10)**

- 8.1 The Group received a presentation from Beverley Tydeman (Chair) and Bidy Youell (Vice-Chair) of the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP). Beverly Tydeman reiterated the need for child and adolescent psychotherapists to have their own protected title to enhance public safety and highlighted the specialist nature of the role of a child psychotherapist using examples relating to their employment setting, their levels of education and training and the emphasis Government place on children’s services by mapping them out as separate to adults services. Bidy Youell provided a detailed explanation of the doctoral level of training provided by the ACP.
- 8.2 During the course of discussion, the following points of view were expressed:-
- There are a variety of different training routes equipping psychotherapists and counsellors with the skills to work with children and young people.
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  - That the ACP had met with the children’s faculty of the UKCP to discuss standards of proficiency and whilst useful discussion had been held, no agreement had yet been reached;

- That it was important to ensure that by giving child and adolescent psychotherapists a protected title, there was no decrease in the workforce or a narrowing down of the routes to registration;
- That discussions had been held between the children’s faculty of the UKCP and the ACP and both parties had agreed those skills necessary to work safely and effectively with children and furthermore, the UKCP think it is necessary to have standards of proficiency in place for those professionals working with children;
- Some members of the group felt that separate standards of proficiency were not required for those working with children since these standards were covered in the generic standards of proficiency;
- It was noted that the title of child and adolescent psychotherapist gained recognition in 1949 and is closely connected with child psychiatry. It was further noted that paediatricians gained recognition without the need for a protected title and were the titles “psychotherapist” and “counsellor” the only two to be protected, this would not preclude a professional from using the title “child psychotherapist;”
- That a separate protected title for “child and adolescent psychotherapist” was required since they do not have the same initial training as a psychotherapist and then specialise, their training is distinctive from the outset;
- That the fundamental question was whether the skills required to work with children warranted a separate protected title;
- With regards to how many child psychotherapists were currently practising, the ACP confirmed that they have 841 professionals registered.
- The importance of thoroughly examining the consequences of protecting the title of child and adolescent psychotherapist was reiterated.

8.3 Beverley Tydeman concluded the presentation stating that there was consensus amongst the PLG that working with children and

young people required a different skill set to those professionals working with adults.

The PLG broke for lunch at 12:20pm and then reconvened at 1:20pm.

**Item 6.10/15 The structure of the Register: Children and young people (report ref: PLG 8/10)**

- 6.1 The Group received a paper for discussion from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Director of Policy and Standards provided a brief summary of those points made during the course of the morning's discussions together with some further points for consideration. The following points were made:-
- There was clear agreement that specific skills were required in order to work safely and effectively with children;
  - The group recognised the difference between the training necessary to become a child and adolescent psychotherapist being different to other routes followed to work with children and young people (such as modality specific training to work with children at entry to the profession; post-registration training; and CPD, supervision and further training
  - That in terms of the Register, complete differentiation was not possible, in the sense that the Register is about distinguishing between protected titles and this would not absolutely prevent a practitioner from working with a child or a young person if they ensured that could do so safely and effectively within their scope of practice.
  - The group considered the issue of annotation (a related but separate issue from that of annotation). At the present time the HPC Register is only annotated if a registered professional has supplementary prescribing rights;
  - The HPC's current contention is that any annotation on the Register needs to be meaningful to both the public and the professions and for it to be so would normally need to carry with it a protected title and/or a protected function.
  - The HPC will be shortly consulting on its approach in this area including some high-level criteria for how to determine whether a qualification should be annotated on the HPC Register. The

issue of annotation of the Register is not directly within the terms of reference of the PLG;

- That in order to protect a title, secondary legislation would be required and this could be a lengthy process.

6.3 During the course of discussion, the following points of view were expressed:-

- That other healthcare regulators applied a different approach to annotation of the Register and since their infrastructures were all different, they were no examples that could be applied to the HPC Register;
- That since the training to be a child and adolescent psychotherapist was so different to that of a psychotherapist and additionally, there was no common training for the two professions from the outset, it would be difficult to annotate the Register since there were no “core skills” to anchor the annotation to;
- That it was only possible to protect those titles that already exist and so the decision needed to be based on the current position rather than any aspirational position;
- Given that the rights of a child were enshrined in legislation, it was important to know how the current standards of proficiency would cover this;
- That the overriding question was whether a profession that has a specific set of skills should be recognised at a registrable level;
- It was noted that those standards applicable to those working with children exist but they were not at a registrable level. Instead standards of proficiency need to be considered as those standards required for entry to the Register;
- Concern was expressed that those skills required to work with children were not being met by the standards currently in place and this should be addressed by having specific standards of proficiency for those working with children. Additionally, by not having specific SOPS in place, there would be no jurisdiction for the HPC to deal with those professionals not meeting the standards;

- That the specific skills required for dealing with children should be covered by the training course curriculum since the generic standards of proficiency were in place to apply to all professions;
- That the role of child counsellor did not stand out as a defined profession but clearly there was an opening for those professionals to define themselves going forward;
- That it should be down to those working as child and adolescent psychotherapists to work together to provide a clear definition of their identity and this would assist in working out whether a separate protected title was necessary. The issue with this was that this would not be easy to do since there was a core group under the remit of the ACP but also those working outside the professional body;
- There was a divergence of views about whether child and adolescent psychotherapists were a clearly defined profession and whether they were sufficiently defined as to warrant a separate protected title;
- There was a strong wish to acknowledge the specialist area of child psychotherapy but there was still work to be done to be convinced that this was a profession in all its senses;
- It was noted that the PLG should exercise caution in defining and redefining identities; the PLG has to be focused on the regulatory issues rather than broader professional issues and the salient point was actually about identifying those titles in common currency;
- That care should be taken that the PLG were not “widening the net” but instead were looking at this discrete group of child psychotherapists as it currently stood.

#### 6.4 The PLG noted the paper.

Action: MG to take forward the points raised above in discussion with the relevant professional bodies in order to generate more information for discussion at a future meeting. In particular, to seek information on the usage and currency of the title ‘child and adolescent psychotherapist’ in the field as whole



**Item 7.10/16 Differentiation and threshold level(s) of qualification: An international perspective (report ref: PLG 9/10)**

- 7.1 The Group received a paper for discussion from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Group noted that the paper set out the international perspective on the issues relating to differentiation and threshold levels of qualification and whilst they agreed that it was a useful paper, did not feel that any solutions were offered in terms of the issues of differentiation and threshold level(s) of qualification which the PLG needed to address.
- 7.3 The PLG noted the paper.

**Item 9.10/18 Plan for meetings September to December 2010 (report ref: PLG 11/10)**

- 9.1 The Group received a paper for discussion from the Executive.
- 9.2 The Group noted the proposed dates and plans for the forthcoming meetings of the PLG.
- 9.3 In response to a question on what information the group would like to see in order to assist in coming to a decision on differentiation, the following points were made:-
- That this should be discussed in full at the next meeting of the group to ensure sufficient time to discuss all outstanding issues;
  - That Sally Aldridge would provide a paper on the BACP curricula on post graduate courses;
  - That Carmen Ablack's paper which presented a different approach to Standards of Proficiency would be circulated;
  - That the professional body meetings had not moved the issue of differentiation forward and it would be useful to hear their views;

- That the most appropriate method for the professional bodies to feed back to the PLG on the issue of differentiation needed to be sought.

9.4 The PLG noted the paper and agreed that the issue of differentiation would be addressed at the next meeting with feedback from professional bodies on the issue as appropriate.

The Group noted the following papers:

**Item 10.10/19 Response to draft standards of proficiency from the consultation on the proposed statutory regulation of psychotherapists and counsellors (report ref: PLG 12/10)**

**Item 11.10/20 Information for organisations invited to present to meetings of the Professional Liaison Group (report ref: PLG 13/10)**

**Item 12.10/21 Timetable and plan of activities (report ref: PLG 14/10)**

**Item 13.10/22 Any other business**

13.1 There was no other business.

**Item 14.10/23 Date of next and subsequent meetings**

14.1 Subsequent meetings of the Group would be held on the following dates:

Tuesday 19 October 2010  
 Monday 15 November 2010  
 Wednesday 15 December 2010  
 Wednesday 2 February 2011

**Chair**

**Date**