

DCP UK Chair's update

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Finding shared inspiration and purpose

AS WE come towards the end of a very challenging year, many of us will be reflecting on how different 2020 has been, compared with what we had hoped for. We may be mourning losses of loved ones, or losses of other kinds, we may be feeling sad, angry or frustrated about the impacts on service users and wider communities, on our families, friends and colleagues, as well as ourselves. We may also be able to reflect on some of the positives that have come for some of us from living more simply, taking more time to enjoy life outdoors in the natural world, less travel and improved air quality, cumulatively improving the climate crisis situation.

Despite the positive news about Covid-19 vaccinations, we are still facing an uncertain future, particularly regarding the prospect of economic depression and the impacts of Brexit. But we also have an opportunity to come together around shared sources of inspiration and shared purpose. People have come together within the profession of clinical psychology, across psychology and the BPS more broadly, as multidisciplinary teams, in the health and care sector, and as communities, in ways that many of us have never seen before. We have enormous strengths on which to build, and opportunities which we can support each other to seize. In order to do this, we need to remember that each and every one of us has been impacted by the events of 2020, and that mutual support and kindness are the currency of positive growth and living by our values.

As part of the BPS, we are bound by our charitable status to provide public benefit, and as a membership organisation we are here for our members. These two guiding principles underpin why we are here and should shape a strategic approach to how we direct our efforts and resources. We are looking at this as we work together with members and with people with lived experience to shape the priorities for our Covid strategy for 2021. These principles should also underpin the forthcoming work on BPS and DCP vision, values and strategic planning for the next five years.

When I reflect on not just 2020 but the years since the new BPS Senior Management Team were appointed, I can see very significant change and progress, which contrast with my experience as DCP Chair prior to this in 2016–2017. At that time, with a couple of notable exceptions, the BPS leadership tended to be remote and unresponsive, the efforts of the DCP to effect change on behalf of our members and the public was often unsupported at best, and on some occasions, initiatives were actually blocked despite having been approved through the proper processes. The organisation as a whole lacked investment and ambition, and was declining in influence, impact and member satisfaction. Our new BPS Chief Executive Sarb Bajwa joined the BPS in April 2018, and he began at once to articulate a vision for change and impact, and to recruit a senior team who could work with him and with members to deliver this. He also made the case for investment in wholesale change. A series of new appointments have been made over the past two years; Director of the Change programme (a temporary role), Director of Communications and Engagement, Director of Finance and Resources, Director of Membership and Professional Development, Head of Legal and Governance and Director of Knowledge and Insight. All of these Directors have made and continue to make a significant and positive contribution to the much-needed transformation of the BPS. We have also really appreciated the opportunity to work with BPS Policy Director Kathryn Scott, who has driven a strong external influence and policy campaign approach; we were sorry to say goodbye to her in October as she is taking up an exciting

new post in Denmark. The DCP Executive committee work with all the BPS Directors in relation to current and future DCP work and developments, and to resolve issues or concerns that may arise. The Directors always do their best to respond as quickly as possible and to find solutions to difficulties. They have supported us with some extremely challenging situations, and they are committed to the values and ethical principles, which underpin our professional, and, I hope, our personal lives.

Since he joined the BPS, Chief Executive Sarb Bajwa has reached out to members across the organisation and has made time for individual meetings with members who have issues they wish to raise. He has made it a priority to find out about and listen to the members of the different Divisions and member networks. He has met with me as DCP Chair and Julia Faulconbridge DCP Vice-Chair on many occasions, he has attended the DCP Executive committee and DCP conferences and has sought to ensure that the issues that are important to us are supported and followed through. For example, he ensured strong BPS support, including personal involvement, in relation to the work with HEE to support the future funding of clinical psychology doctoral training and salaried trainees.

Since lockdown 1.0 (as I assume we now term it), the BPS has like many organisations had to make rapid and significant change to how it operates in order to accommodate remote working for all staff, and has been unable to use the main base in Leicester due to pretty much unceasing local lockdown. In the initial wave of the pandemic a massive amount of work was done by BPS members and BPS staff to produce written guidance and online webinars/training to support our members and the public see <https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/professional> and <https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public>. This work continues albeit at a less hectic pace. In the period from April–June 2020, the BPS produced 24 Covid-related guidance publications free to download on a vast range of topics. DCP members contributed to this, and the DCP also produced our own guidance documents and our Covid Bulletin for members (which continues on a monthly basis). The support we have received from BPS Directors, and in particular the communications and publications teams has been phenomenal. Today there are 43 BPS documents / webinars available for psychologists and other professionals, the most recent published on 10 November; the [Impact of Covid-19 on the wellbeing of Psychologists](#). There are [32 BPS publications for the public](#). The first was published as early as 16 March on talking to children about coronavirus. The most recent on 3 September is a short film produced by members of Division of Educational & Child Psychology; [Children & Young peoples' experiences of isolation and shielding due to Covid-19](#) We have produced 25 DCP Covid-19 publications and webinars, and 22 Covid Bulletins (<https://www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-clinical-psychology/resources>). Some of these also appear on the BPS resources pages. Special mention in this domain must be made of the following DCP Executive committee members:

- Roman Raczka, DCP Chair-Elect, who has been the DCP representative on the BPS Covid-19 coordination group and who has led the BPS workstream on *adaptations to workforce*,
- Nichola Rooney, DCP Northern Ireland Chair who led on the BPS *bereavement and care of relatives* workstream and has played a significant role in the Northern Ireland Covid gold command team
- Amra Rao who has contributed to the BPS *staff wellbeing* workstream, co-led support for members wellbeing sessions with Sheelagh Rodgers and co-led the DCP *Social and Racial Disparities in the time of Covid* workstream with Jo Hemmingfield
- Julia Faulconbridge DCP Vice-Chair, who has led on communications, supporting the delivery of the DCP Covid-19 publications and leading on the production of the Covid-19 Bulletin for members
- Richard Pemberton, who has co-led on the development of DCP Covid-19 strategy with me, and who has contributed at a national level to the SPI-B group

National Assessors appointments

We are very pleased to be able to announce that Eric Karas, a very experienced National Assessor, has been appointed to the role of interim Chief National Assessor. The recommendation for the appointment was made by the Lead National Assessors and the Chair of ACP-UK and approved by Alison Clarke (Chair of the Practice Board).

The appointment is interim, as Eric wished to help with the relaunch of the scheme and the eventual appointment of a Chief Assessor who would take up the appointment for the full three-year term.

The National Assessor scheme is used in providing External Psychology Assessors for appointments to Consultant posts (Band 8C and above) in Health and Social Care (and specific training/research posts within HEIs). The National Assessor system and guidance documents have recently been reviewed and will shortly be published with relaunch of the scheme. We are about to embark on the recruitment of new National Assessors and any psychologists interested in making an application will be able to do this very shortly.

We both thank and congratulate Eric in taking up this new role as Chief National Assessor.

Psychological Professions week & conference

The first ever Psychological Professions week took place from 16–20 November, organised by the England Psychological Professions Networks, but open to all. Over 3,300 people registered to attend. The conference week began with an introduction from Adrian Whittington, National Lead for Psychological Professions, NHSE/I and HEE, and Jo Lenaghan, HEE Director of Strategy and Mental Health lead, leading into the Launch of the 'Psychological Professions into Action' vision, to which many members will have contributed. The infographic can be seen [here](#). The vision statement is: *To transform lives and communities by extending and embedding psychological knowledge and practice across the whole of health and care.* It is supported by five commitments:

- To unite and increase diversity in the psychological professions
- To transform and innovate
- To put people first
- To help our communities to thrive
- To make all health and care psychological

Expert by Experience Helen Leigh-Phippard gave a call to action to implement these commitments individually as well as collectively. She gave an example of the letters many services send out routinely which can feel threatening to their recipients e.g. those which say that you will be discharged from the service if you fail to attend two appointments. Helen described how a letter of this kind was experienced by her daughter. An action that we could take would be to review the letters sent by our services and to rewrite those letters using more compassionate language.

Prescribing rights

In response to an initial request from NHS England (NHSE) in 2016, the BPS embarked on an extended programme of engagement and consultation about whether some psychologists should be given the option to train to be able to prescribe medication.

Consultation has taken place between 2018 and October 2020, with BPS members and other professions, service users and the general public. The evidence gathered during that period indicated that there were more people in favour of giving some psychologists the option to prescribe medication, compared to those that opposed it.

Following the conclusion of this work, the BPS has confirmed that it wants to remain involved and engaged in a constructive dialogue with NHSE about prescribing rights. Committing to continuing conversations with NHSE does not mean that prescribing rights for some psychologists

have now been agreed, nor does it mean that the society's position on this issue is fixed. NHSE has said that it does not need the BPS to have a firm position at this point and they have confirmed that we can withdraw from the process later should we decide to do so.

The key questions are: what would produce the best outcomes for service users and what would work best for the profession? During the period of consultation and engagement, it became clear that there are deeply held, passionate views on both sides of the debate. The BPS and DCP embrace a wide range of different perspectives and when faced with complex issues, such as prescribing rights, there is often a difference of opinion among our members about what overall stance we should take and how we should come to a position.

As a society dedicated to listening to its members, the BPS has now committed to a further piece of work to give members the opportunity to share their views on a range of issues, including prescribing; issues which some people feel go to the heart of what it means to be a psychologist both now and in the future. We will be ensuring that DCP members are able to engage fully in this process and look forward to taking these conversations further.

More details can be found at:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/prescribing-rights-some-psychologists-update>

Experts by Experience updates

After months of work, (building on work done previously over a number of years) we now have a BPS EbE framework of principles, values and governance which is ready for piloting in the DCP in January–June 2021, prior to wider BPS roll out. In addition to, and reflecting, the NSUN (National Service User Network) 4 PIs (purpose, presence, process, principles and impact), the framework is underpinned by the following high level principles:

1. Co-production
2. Mutually beneficial and partnership led
3. Clear and transparent working
4. Building confidence and capability
5. Driving and enhancing the successful transfer of knowledge
6. Supporting a process of sharing and promoting psychology
7. Equality, diversity and inclusion
8. Working with the society should not cost EbEs
9. Shared values for all
10. Address barriers that exist

The document includes a payment framework in relation to a wide range of activities. We are very much looking forward to piloting the framework so that we can build on and further develop our partnership working with Experts by Experience. We are also really pleased to be able to support this approach becoming more widespread in the BPS. The framework has been developed in partnership with our EbE leads for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and has been supported by BPS Directors Debra Malpass and Karen Beamish, with particular thanks also to Hannah Farndon, Professional Practice Policy Advisor.

Further to our successful webinar earlier in the year, this year's coproduced DCP EbE event took place on 3 & 4 December. The focus of the event was on *Building Compassionate Communities Together*; particularly important as we live through the current global pandemic.

This was the fourth in a series of events that the Division of Clinical Psychology Experts by Experience subcommittee and wider group have co-produced with Experts by Experience. These events have focused on different parts of the country and the pre-Covid planning for this event was the North East – hence a large number of the people contributing are from this area. Contributions included music, talks, poetry, discussion and performances from voluntary sector and NHS

organisations that are offering important support led or co-produced with Experts by Experience. These included Streetwise Opera, Freedom From Torture, Fulfilling Lives, Joe Wilson (piano), Recovery Connections, Fallen Angels, gobscure (performance poet), ReCoCo (Recovery College), Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, CNTW NHS Foundation Trust, and TEWV NHS Foundation Trust. It was a very moving, informative, engaging and uplifting event.

We are also organising an engagement session re the public-facing aspects of our DCP Covid strategy, planned for 26 January 2021.

Member updates

These should be coming to your inbox every month – please have a look at them and watch out for them! They are a key vehicle for sharing important updates and to offer opportunities to get involved and to influence.

The BPS Member Journey phase 2 is being facilitated by organisational consulting firm Korn Ferry <https://www.kornferry.com/uk> They will be undertaking a root and branch review of member networks with us. We will be able to identify the key questions, issues and risks and work together to develop proposals. An 18-month process is envisaged. The scoping phase has recently started with sessions with the Chairs of member networks and there will be more information and discussion at the BPS Senate meeting on 3 December.

Towards racial and social equality, be part of the solution

Every person has been impacted by the pandemic. But Covid-19 health risks, experiences, burdens and outcomes are not the same for everyone: the virus has exposed many racial and social inequalities. The DCP position paper 'Racial & social inequalities in the times of Covid-19 – taking conversations forward' offered initial thoughts on the risks and impact of Covid on pre-existing racial and social inequalities and structural racism. Whilst we see impact on many disadvantaged groups, the scope of this workstream has been to look specifically at the disproportionate number of people from black and minority backgrounds losing their lives during the pandemic. The paper has presented an understanding of why this is happening and outlined an urgent call to action. A framework for change was developed for the profession, organisations and policy makers.

A campaign to raise awareness and mobilise action was launched at the DCP webinar in October 2020. The event attracted wide-ranging interest with over 600 registrants from a variety of backgrounds. The webinar was introduced by Dr Amra Rao and Jo Hemmingfield. Dr Roman Raczka, DCP-UK Chair-Elect, outlined some of the key actions that we all need to take to tackle racial and social disparities. Dr Manreesh Bains and Binna Kandola focused on how we move towards tangible change and identify potential barriers. Dr Leslie Brisett widened the conversation by taking a broader, psychoanalytic approach to open up space for imagining our humanity. Ghiselle Green and Kalpita Kunde co-presented on the anti-racism campaign and the importance of making a pledge to antiracism action. Reflections on the presentations were offered by listeners Augustine Sagoe, Meherzin Das, Linda Wilkinson and Dr Beth Greenhill, reflecting that each one of us will have to address our own process to take learning forward. The impressive range of speakers and presentations encouraged us all to self-examine and reflect on what actions we need to take next.

The key messages at the event highlighted a number of themes including: '*Putting our own house in order*' and '*Not just saying the right things but doing them*'. DCP is taking a number of steps to respond to this including the recent setting up of an EDI Task & Finish Group, which is working with the DCP Minorities subcommittee as well as the BPS EDI Presidential task force. The DCP Racial & Social Inequalities in the times of Covid group is setting out a campaign for the next three months aimed at: (a) raising awareness (b) naming barriers to change (c) engaging with diverse perspectives (d) inviting pledges to anti-racist action. We are committed to our key slogan

– ‘Towards racial and social equality, be part of the solution’. This includes ‘putting our own house in order’. We are developing a DCP pledge, which we will be sharing with members. We are encouraging everyone to look at the key recommendations of the paper and to consider pledging at a personal and professional level. We have developed a pledge card as below:

**Having read the Racial and social inequalities paper on taking conversations forward,
I pledge to take the following action(s):**

We encourage you to share your pledges with us at dcp-racial-social-disparities@bps.org.uk . This will help us in creating a network of collective influence and shared learning through the DCP EDI pages.

Season’s greetings

As we approach the holiday season this year, I would just like to offer everyone my very best wishes for a restful and peaceful time at some point over the coming weeks. Whether celebrating Christmas or Hannukah, or whether your festivals come at other times of the year, or if the spiritual life means something very different to you, I hope that this truly is a ‘season of goodwill’ for you and yours.

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