

DCP Scotland

Newsletter – August 2020

Welcome to the new issue of the DCP Scotland newsletter. We hope that all of our members are keeping well at this tumultuous time, and that this keeps you up-to-date on some of the things that the DCP is doing to respond to the current crisis.



Scotland Chair's Update – Alison Robertson

How are you all doing over there on the mainland, I wonder? One of the things I noticed when I viewed my house here outside Stornoway was the opportunity for a panoramic view of the shapely Sutherland hills. I had not quite appreciated there are also views of hills towards Harris and south west Lewis, going the other way, and endless exotic sunsets.

I tried to confess last time that I am not the most focused of people, but I do respond well to small goals (ideally socially connected ones, but we can't be so choosy these days). I was listening to Stephen Reicher today, talking about his experience advising governments in recent months – all the focus is as much on behaviour as biology.

Like many people I have set a few lockdown challenges, all of which involve changes in behaviour, or developing new behaviours. One has been to get myself into the water, given I live near a beach. (I made the mistake of watching an interview with Wim Hof, the Ice Man one stormy winter night). Typically I avoid beaches unless they are rocky, but with regular practice and a graded approach, it is remarkable where you can get to. And taking the plunge certainly wakes you up in the morning.

Scotland chair's update, *continued*



As you can see, I am just about managing to keep my head above water between pandemic planning, extra meetings at work, extra meetings with the DCP and BPS, as well as the effort to keep cheerful while socially isolated away from friends and family. So, if I cannot get a seat on that Calmac ferry this weekend, perhaps there is another way... a lot has been going on.

By now you will all have tried a range of platforms for connecting with others. Training on the use of remote working for CBT for trauma really made me think about what is possible, and literature reviews, and collations of practical experiences that I have read and seen on webinars indicates that these approaches can be very effective. Not to mention saving the planet with reduced travel.

Detailed aspects of this evidence base are really interesting with lots of developments. I signed up to the BPS conference today and tomorrow, with a view to thinking about the format and technology for future CPD events for DCP or perhaps BPS Scotland. I think the use of people posting questions and comments during the presentation was essential for me to feel I was actually at an event with others.

Claudia Hammond, of BBC All in the Mind fame, was great, with warm, professional presenter manner and reflecting on what she had heard and chairing questions to speakers. I often think she has too much neuroscience on her programme, so this week she has heard a lot from psychologists. I signed up for the social networking event quiz but I was rather disappointed – it turned out I had to write my answers on a piece of paper on my own at home – this did not feel like social networking and for someone who has lived on their own for weeks (and there are people who have been way more isolated than I have) - it simply emphasised my isolation further, so I left. Apologies to those who made the effort to prepare and present the quiz.

I tried Kahoot in another training event and I am told it is used in education quite a lot. I think my kids were using it on quiz nights. It was much more social as you saw people's names as they answered and who was doing well, all instantly fed back as you played. You can probably tell I am not a gamer when simple things like this impress me. My father tells me he was video conferencing between a London office and The Hague in 1963. But it is really so interesting how we have all been able to change our competence with this technology, whether we wanted to or not, simply by doing it.

DCP and BPS Scotland committee update

This month several of us have taken part in a wide range of BPS and DCP meetings in relation to the change programme. One day I did an hour's interview with one of the people employed by The Social Kinetic who were commissioned to do the work. She was in Addis Ababa and I was in Stornoway. More amazing potential for technology.

This company uses a platform called Howspace, alongside zoom, which holds slide content, rating scales, post it notes, and a whole range of facilities which make you feel like you are at a very interactive workshop. I took part in a meeting with BPS network chairs, and another with the DCP, all as part of the effort to understand how to improve the organisation for members and people with lived experience of psychological difficulties.

My main focus has been to have the differences recognised along with the commonalities (Scottish policy differences; clinical psychology practice priorities). I would also like to be better informed about actions for each of us in relation to the diversity and inclusion agendas, as well as learning what we can from psychology about reducing our impact on the environment.

In addition to committee meetings and reps assembly, DCP UK has had weekly Covid-19 meetings and also set up a heads of psychology meeting for England which has been really appreciated. I have shared some of the

ways HOPS in Scotland has developed and contributed really effectively.

DCP Scotland revised its strategic priorities in March and has been trying to liaise much more closely with BPS Scotland. The BPS and DCP are working to ensure publications are either UK focused or adjusted for use in each nation.

The vice chair has set up a few meetings for chairs of the devolved nations to listen to some of the difficulties. A primary care project which will attract considerable funding will now focus on all four nations rather than just England, with one aim being to consider psychology's contribution beyond therapy.

We worked hard to identify our rep on the practice board and are grateful to Joy Nisbet for taking forward a letter from NES, HOPS, DCP-S and ACP, which requested a way of appointing the Lead Assessor for Scotland which ensured involvement from appropriate representatives within Scotland to ensure candidates would have an awareness of NHS Scotland.

Our committee is becoming a little depleted (very sad about Jamie's decision below). If any of you are interested in supporting the work of DCP-S please [get in touch](#) with us.

Other updates

Media and communications

With more partnership and communication between the home nations and different divisions, we are hoping to see an increased streamlining of information and updates between various social media platforms under the BPS.

The BPS is also continuing to modernise its website and user interface to make the member experience more accessible and informative as to the resources that are readily available to members.

With the restrictions on our daily living at present, all of us have seen unprecedented changes into how we navigate our day-to-day jobs. For me, it has been a rollercoaster of balance between managing clinical casework with the demands of keeping up with family/friends as well as extra activities on the side.

Unfortunately, that balance has been feeling a little off for quite some time now, and within the spirit of my love for ACT, I have taken some time to assess and realign

my values. Doing so has made me realise that perhaps it is appropriate, for now, to take a break from my role on the DCP-Scotland committee and work on rebalancing that very fragile scale that supports my work-life balance at present.

I am saddened to step down for now, but know that it will be within the best interests for myself and the committee for another to take up the mantle who may be able to commit more time and energy to the amazing work.

More generally, I would just like to thank each of the DCP-Scotland committee members and Scotland reps that I have worked with closely over the last two years. It has been a very rewarding experience to add to my professional development journey and has taught me

the value of engaging in wider work 'beyond the therapy room'.

To be passionate about our profession, it really is a golden opportunity to get engaged with wider professional bodies that seek to provide a space to raise wider systemic and professional issues for the profession, to which there are many.

I strongly urge anyone who feels they may have some capacity to consider engaging with your local committee/network to do so - we are the future of our profession, and we have an opportunity to shape what that looks like for years to come.

Jamie Ferrie

Students

The DCP has been working for more than a year with NHS England and Health Education England (HEE) on estimating the workforce required to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan in England. The announcement by HEE of a 25% increase in training commissions this year is therefore greatly welcomed.

Although it is in the first instance for one year, the DCP will be working to ensure the new numbers continue. It makes the work that was undertaken to secure the current funding arrangements announced in the previous newsletter very timely. It also arrived just in time for courses to offer this year's applicants places prior to the clearing house deadline.

In Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) report an increase of 22.8% extra places between 2016-2017 intake and 2020-2021 intake between the east and west doctoral training programmes.

There are continual collaborative discussions between NES and the Scottish Government to hopefully sustain and increase training places in the future. Courses (and no doubt trainees and supervisors) have done a sterling job during the pandemic to ensure learning outcomes and placements remain within accreditation requirements.

Policy and government

We continue to liaise with Scottish Government as aspects of the Mental Health Act review come up. We continue to propose that clinical psychologists have a significant role to play both in relation to assessing capacity and to assessing and managing treatment plans for appropriate groups of detained patients.

An Early Years position paper has been developed by the BPS Policy team, and we have worked with them to try to ensure it is pitched appropriately given the wide range of developments well underway for this part of the Scottish population.

For example, the Scottish government has recently published its [Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board Delivery Plan](#) for 2020-2021 in its efforts to increase access of psychological therapies for 5,500 women and families.

This is strongly in line with Scotland's policy priorities to focus more on perinatal mental health in efforts to increase preventative interventions, and to apply trauma-informed approaches, for children and young people and their families. We continue to work with the cross-party Group for Mental Health and the Scottish Mental Health Partnership.

Professional development

With Covid-19 restrictions likely impacting on large group gatherings for quite some time, it is likely the case that CPD events will take place virtually through 'webinars' for the foreseeable future.

The BPS is now supporting the different divisions, including DCP-Scotland, to consider hosting CPD/ conference events virtually through its licensed Zoom account, which can hold up to 1,000 people!

Have any ideas for CPD events? [Contact us](#) to share your thoughts. I wonder about a BPS Scotland event next year, in partnership with people from key organisations, with a focus on mental wellbeing, climate change, and the necessary behaviour changes pre-COPS26?

Response to Covid-19

BPS Scotland is holding its virtual interdivisional event on 24 September from 10.30am-3:30pm. The topic is 'Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic: Contributions from across psychology.'

In the last few years these have had wide relevance for clinical psychologists. In 2019 the topic was children and young people; in 2018 trauma; and in 2017 it asked what counts as evidence in evidence-based practice?

Everything is more accessible now, so I hope some of you can make the date.

Get in Touch

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