

The British Psychological Society

Promoting excellence in psychology

Employment support for counselling psychologists

Psychologists face many challenges in the current economic and political climate. Expectations have changed and the domain of influence and skills required of psychologists have broadened considerably. Individuals have experienced personal employment challenges as services are reorganised and roles changed. In the NHS for example, changes to commissioning arrangements from April 2013 and delivery cost pressures have meant significant change to mental health services and the roles of psychologists. On the other hand, opportunities have arisen for groups of psychologists to form consortia and bid for services, and to work in partnership with the third sector (for whom opportunities are also expanding and who are at the same time being expected to work to different demands and pressures). In the forensic sector there is increasing private provision. Opportunities for independent practice are increasing, as many psychologists are leaving the NHS and setting up businesses successfully, where the challenges have become greater with rising public expectations. In the university sector, the push for internationally recognised research, coupled with the customer focus of today's student body, is raising the bar for academics.

Links to the organisations and information referred to in this leaflet can be found on the DCoP website under the 'Employment' tab. The DCoP site can be found by following the links from the 'Member Networks' link on the BPS website. Please note that you will need to be signed in to access much of the information on the DCoP site.

The role of the BPS and the Division of Counselling Psychology (DCoP)

The BPS, and more specifically your Division (made up of volunteers who are all counselling psychologists), work to support you in your career and in your professional development. Our priority is to develop and advance psychology and specifically counselling psychology as a profession. The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is a regulator of practitioner psychologists in the UK and was set up to protect the public. Therefore it has a different role to the BPS although we do work collaboratively together. The BPS and the Division of Counselling Psychology support employment in a variety of ways and some of these are listed below.



Employment concerns

The DCoP will bring you the support of professional colleagues on matters affecting the profession as a whole. We will respond to common issues of concern in a number of ways, such as raising them at the relevant Society committees (e.g. Workforce Planning Committee) or Boards (e.g. the Professional Practice Board and the Membership Standards Board). Various letters that have been sent in support of DCoP members are available on the DCoP website under the 'Employment' tab. They include letters written to the various Boards, supporting employment by competence not adjectival title, and clarifying that applied psychologists can supervise across the domains of registration.

Advertising of psychology posts

The Standing Committee for Psychologists in Health and Social Care produced a letter in September 2010 giving guidance on the advertising of Applied Psychologist posts, signed by representatives from the Division of Counselling Psychology and Division of Clinical Psychology, and the Chair of the Occupation Advisory Committee of Unite, the trade union. This letter is titled '2010 BPS letter joint advertising of posts'. Dr Maureen McIntosh (Chair Elect) and Dr Helen Nicholas (Chair) have written an article summarising current initiatives to address member concerns in the area of employment and employability. The title of the article is 'Dispelling the myths about counselling psychologists whilst challenging discrimination'. Please see the DCoP website for further details.

Supervision of trainees

Instructions for supervision of trainees on placement can be found on the DCoP website.

Additional Support from your Division

If you have a concern that you think is relevant to counselling psychology as a whole and you want the support of your Division, please complete the brief questionnaire which can be found at <https://response.questback.com/britishpsychologicalsociety/emp>. Your response will be passed on to a relevant committee member.

Please complete the surveys the Division undertakes from time to time. We need accurate employment data so that we can influence employment issues and workforce planning, and inform key policy and decision makers about the number of counselling psychologists in the workplace.

Professional networking and opportunities:

- Networks and interest groups on professional areas of interest (see our leaflet on DCoP groups) – For example, Special Group for Independent Practice, NHS, Black and Asian, Cancer and Palliative Care, Learning Disabilities, Leadership and national/regional communities which can address local employment issues.
- Informal networking opportunities on social media. For details of our Facebook group, e-mail dcopfacebook@gmail.com with your membership number and the e-mail address you use for your account.
- BPS Psychologist Appointments: Search for 'jobs in psychology' for the BPS jobs website.
- NHS Psychologist Appointments: Search for 'NHS jobs' for jobs in the NHS.
- Civil Service Psychologist Appointments: Search for 'civil service jobs' for posts in the Defense Medical Services and elsewhere in the Civil Service.

Information leaflets and guidance

Much information and guidance can be found on the BPS's main website in the 'Policy' section. These are downloadable PDF files for personal use, available from www.bps.org.uk/policy-research-guidelines

Here are some examples:

- *Generic Professional Practice Guidelines 2017.*
- *Guidelines and Literature Review for Psychologists Working Therapeutically with Sexual and Gender Minority Clients.*
- *Good Practice Guidelines for the Use of Psychological Formulation.*
- *Psychologists as Expert Witnesses: Guidelines and Procedures for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.*

The Division's publications include the following. Some of these are for members only and require sign in to view and download from our website, or via the BPS shop at www.bpsshop.org.uk:

- *Division of Counselling Psychology Professional Practice Guidelines.*
- *Race, Culture and Diversity: A Collection of Articles 2017.*
- *An Introduction to Bidding for Public Sector Contracts for Counselling Psychologists.*
- *Working Relationally with Trauma: A discussion.*

Support with continuous professional development (CPD)

CPD is a HCPC registration requirement. DCoP members can access journals (with free online access to EBSCO), conferences and events, and CPD through the BPS Learning Centre via the BPS members website under the 'Professional Development' tab. Many of these are at reduced rates for members.

The place of professional indemnity insurance

The UK Government has introduced legislation (the Health Care and Associated Professions (Indemnity Arrangements) Order 2014) which now makes it mandatory for health professionals to have a professional indemnity arrangement in place. This may be achieved either through employment where the employer provides the indemnity, or through a privately arranged policy. The HCPC has made having such an arrangement in place a condition of registration. Further information can be obtained on the HCPC website at: www.hcpc-uk.org.

You need to make sure you are covered not only for a negligence claim for clinical work but also for the costs of a disciplinary hearing. An employer's insurance is likely only to cover the former. You need to check carefully that you have cover in place that meets your personal/professional needs.

The BPS works with three insurers to provide preferential rates to our members. Details of these can be found on the main BPS website under 'Member Resources'.

How a trade union can support you in employment

A trade union is there to support you, provide information and advice and, more importantly, represent you in any employment difficulty, be it to do with organisational change (redundancy, down-banding); patient/client or colleague complaint; disciplinary matter; or an employee-led

complaint (grievance). A union can also access free legal advice for you if necessary, and provides collective representation on employment matters for psychologists.

The Unite union has an occupational professional committee for psychologists, which is chaired by a psychologist, and on which DCoP has representation. The other main NHS union is Unison.

Most psychologists employed in the university sector belong to the University and College Union. Links to these three unions and how to join them are available from the DCoP website.

Other sources of information on employment support

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), a statutory organisation, has information booklets that cover your statutory rights on a wide range of employment matters including grievance, disciplinary and redundancy. The booklets can be downloaded from the Acas website at www.acas.org.uk. Acas also has a free and confidential advice helpline on 08457 47 47 47.

Some employers give staff access to free, confidential staff welfare services which often contain a provision for some employment advice, so it is worth checking what is available to you. However, invariably these are for initial guidance only and these advisers will not act for you and will not represent you.

Home insurance policies may also contain a legal advice option (often for an additional premium) which may cover employment matters. You should check the details and coverage of your policy.

For further information on the work of the Society or to download a copy of our annual report, please visit our website or contact us at:

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