

# Annual Report - United Kingdom

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*Health Psychology in the UK*

Health psychology is now a well-established discipline in the UK. The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Health Psychology (DHP) currently has 2,115 members in total as of November 2014, constituting 696 full members, 1,224 general members and 195 members in-training. This continues to increase from 1,601 in 2010, 1,676 in 2011, 1,947 in 2012 and 2,036 in 2013.

The DHP committee, now Chaired by Sasha Cain, alongside past Chair Professor Paul Bennett and incoming Chair Professor Karen Rodham, continues to support Health Psychology in the UK and has key sub-committees to do this in the areas of Research, Practice, CPD (continuing professional development), Training, Publicity and Liaison, Postgraduate Affairs and Conference organization.

There are also representatives from DHP Northern Ireland (Dr Noleen McCorry) and DHP Scotland (Hannah Dale), with the current development of DHP Wales (Dr Michele Gray) and a DHP England, for whom the committee are currently seeking a representative.

Alongside the work of the DHP, a group of psychologists are working on the development of an Applied Psychology Network, which is currently in its early days. Further to this, there has been the recent development of a Health Psychology in Public Health Network, Chaired by the Director of Public Health, Hertfordshire, Jim McManus, with myself (Dr Angel Chater) as Chair Elect, which will have its inaugural meeting in February 2015.

More information on the DHP, along with activities, events and targeted leaflets that give details about Health Psychology to the general public,

employers, employees and GPs, can be found on the website through the following link: <http://www.bps.org.uk/dhp>

## *Training and Professional Development in Health Psychology in the UK*

The review of competencies of trainee health psychologists has now been completed and an updated curriculum is now being rolled out across all accredited programmes. This has created more focus on practitioner skills and techniques. Requirements for training in Health Psychology in the UK currently stands as a 1 year full-time (or 2 year part-time equivalent) MSc in Health Psychology, which when accredited by the BPS leads to a Stage 1 qualification in Health Psychology. This needs to be followed by a period of 2 years (or part-time equivalent) supervised practice in Health Psychology which must show competency in the key areas of generic professional practice, research, teaching, consultancy and behaviour change for a trainee to be eligible to apply for Full membership of the DHP and Chartered Status with the BPS. This training provides the trainee with the Standards of Proficiency needed to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a legal requirement to be able to practice as a Health Psychologist in the UK. There are currently 38 accredited MSc Health Psychology (Stage 1) programmes within the UK. Stage 2 can be studied through either a university route, of which there are 11 accredited courses in the UK, or via an independent route, whereby the student would be independently supervised by a suitably qualified Health Psychologist to gain the competencies through

a BPS agreed training plan.

Supporting continuing professional development (CPD) portfolios in health psychology, the CPD sub-committee of the DHP, chaired by Francis Quinn is continuing to develop workshops in the area. These are advertised through the BPS learning centre.

We have delivered several career talks around the country, with a focused session for Health Psychologists in Training at our annual meeting. Our Twitter account is going strong with 2,824 followers, allowing us to keep those interested in Health Psychology informed in DHP activity, new research and issues relevant to health psychology. Anyone can follow the DHP @divhealthpsych. We also now have a Division of Health Psychology Community Group on Facebook that keeps people up to date on related topics in the discipline.

#### *Health Psychology Research and Dissemination in the UK*

The national journal linked to the BPS is the British Journal of Health Psychology, with an impact factor of 2.045, led by the current editors Professor Alison Wearden and Professor David French. The Division of Health Psychology also publishes the Health Psychology Update, which goes out to all members of the DHP and is managed by the Publicity and Liaison Sub-committee (Chaired by Margaret Husted). The current editor is Katherine Swainston.

The Research Sub-committee of the DHP, led by Dr Koula Asimakopoulou, continues to promote research in the discipline. A popular initiative is the award for most outstanding Health Psychology MSc thesis. Students who have achieved the highest grade in their institution can be nominated by their course director for the award. Winners are invited to attend and present at the annual conference. We have also been working to get health psychologists onto research funding panels and develop impact case studies to support Health Psychology research.

The 2014 annual conference and general meeting for the DHP was held from the 10th-12th September 2014 in the scenic city of York. Key note speakers included Professor Chris Armitage who discussed "Implementation intentions as theory delivery devices"; Professor Ron Borland, who spoke about "Building theory to understand the complexities of smoking cessation"; Professor Jane Wardle, who debated "Genes or behaviour as the cause of obesity: A false dichotomy" and Professor Alison Wearden, who discussed "Understanding and managing chronic fatigue syndrome in an interpersonal context".

The 2015 annual DHP conference will be held in London on the 16th - 18th Sept 2015, while we prepare a joint 2016 DHP/EHPS conference in Aberdeen. We hope members of the EHPS will join us at our next annual meeting.

Overall, the Division of Health Psychology encourages links with our European friends and the EHPS and any ideas on how to do this are welcomed, which I as National Delegate can facilitate.



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