

EHPS Annual National Delegate Report 2016

Country: United Kingdom

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ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Health Psychology in the UK

Health Psychology has been established for 30 years now in the United Kingdom (UK). There is little written about its history, however, I had the pleasure of writing a piece with two of the founding members when the discipline celebrated a quarter of a century of Health Psychology in the UK a few years ago (Johnston, Weinman & Chater, 2011). I am now embarking on an oral history project, collaborating with a Health Psychologist in each of the devolved nations (Dr Francis Quinn, Scotland; Professor Tony Cassidy, Northern Ireland and Professor Val Morrison, Wales), that aims to record the development of Health Psychology within the UK. This work has been funded by the Royal Society and will involve interviews with founding and leading Health Psychologists. This work will help us to document the development of the discipline in the UK, from those who were involved at the time. These interviews will be archived by the British Psychological Society for others who may be interested in its history. Watch this space!

The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Health Psychology (DHP) had 1,980 members in total as of July 2016, constituting 996 Chartered members and 957 graduate members. Membership has reduced ever so slightly over 2015-2016, (previous year figures: 1,993 in 2015, 2,115 in 2014, 2,036 in 2013, 1,947 in 2012, 1,676 in 2011, and 1,601 in 2010). This may be a reflection of individuals reducing their outgoing costs to professional organizations and the ever-increasing pressures on academic and NHS budgets. The DHP are thinking of ways to increase the benefits of membership to support Health Psychologists and those in training within the UK.

The DHP committee is currently Chaired by Professor Karen Rodham, who is the first DHP Chair to be in position in the newly agreed 2-year term, supported from September 2016 by Dr Jo Hart who is Chair Elect. The committee continue to support the discipline by running CPD events with a focus both on research and practice. The devolved Nations Chairs are working more closely with the Chair of the DHP and in the forthcoming year will have regular strategy meetings to ensure that the DHP represent the needs of all its members.

DHP is in discussion with the Health Psychology in Public Health Network (HPPHN: <http://www.hpphn.org.uk/>) and the Institute for Health Promotion and Education (IHPE: <http://ihpe.org.uk/>) about developing a reciprocal relationship that benefits all members and helps to disseminate Health Psychology research, practice and opportunities to a wider audience.

More information on the DHP, along with activities, events and targeted leaflets that give details about Health Psychology to the general public, employers, employees, GPs, Directors of Public Health and commissioners 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

Requirements for training in Health Psychology in the UK remains the same. Trainees are required to complete a 1 year full-time (or 2 year part-time equivalent) MSc in Health Psychology, which

must be accredited by the BPS to lead to a Stage 1 qualification in Health Psychology. The trainee would then need to complete 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 the trainee to be eligible to apply for Full membership of the DHP and Chartered Status with the BPS. This provides the trainee with the Standards of Proficiency (SoPs) 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 37 accredited MSc Health Psychology (Stage 1) courses within the UK. Details of registered courses can be found on the BPS training page of their website (<http://www.bps.org.uk/careers-education-training/careers-education-and-training>). Stage 2 can be studied through either a university route, of which there are 6 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. For this, supervisors should be registered on the RAPPS (Register of Applied Practice Psychology Supervisors), which can be found on the BPS website (<http://www.bps.org.uk/bpssearchablelists/rapps>).

Career trajectories and opportunities for those wanting to work in Health Psychology continue to be promoted. I was over in Belfast recently (29th June 2016) to give a public lecture on my various experiences in areas of research, teaching, consultancy and practice for a careers talk hosted by DHP Northern Ireland. I will give another at the BPS offices in London on the 21st September 2016. Many other health psychologists are engaged in promoting careers in health psychology in this way.

The DHP Twitter account is growing year on year and in July 2016 it had 4,277 followers (up from 3,359 this time last year and 2,824 in 2014). Anyone can follow the DHP @divhealthpsych or join the Division of Health Psychology Community Group on Facebook where they can also post topics of interest to the group and share interesting empirical work or create debate on topics related to Health Psychology.

Health Psychology Research and Dissemination in the UK

The impact factor of the British Journal of Health Psychology continues to rise, now at 2.895 (up from 2.776 in July 2015). Professor Alison Wearden and Professor David French remain the current editors. 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 Subcommittee.

Health Psychology research in the UK is mainly disseminated through the DHP annual conference held this year as a joint conference with the EHPS in Aberdeen from the 23rd-27th August 2016. The conference was entitled, *Behaviour Change: Making an impact on health and health services*. Keynote speakers were: Professor John Cacioppo (University of Chicago), Professor Marie Johnston (University of Aberdeen), Professor Kevin Patrick (UC San Diego School of Medicine) and Professor Aleksandra Luszczynska (University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Wroclaw). Next year's conference will be from the 20th-22nd September in Cardiff, save the date! The other noteworthy conference that covers health psychology research and practice is the UK Society for Behavioural Medicine (UKSBM: <http://www.uksbm.org.uk/>) annual conference, this year held in Cardiff on the 1st-2nd December 2016.

Linking the EHPS with UK Health Psychology

The DHP Chair, and both the current and in-coming Chairs of the EHPS (Professor Robbert Sanderman and Dr Karen Morgan), are exploring ways to cement a relationship between EHPS and DHP. This has been the first year that I have not sat on the DHP committee for nearly a decade, so a special thanks to DHP Chair, Professor Karen Rodham for her support in providing some of the details for this report. It really does help to be within the DHP committee structure when trying to report back to the EHPS on developments within Health Psychology in the UK! This will be my last year as the UK National Delegate for the EHPS, as I will take on a new role as the

Chair of the Health Psychology in Public Health Network at the next AGM in February 2017. It has been a great honour to represent UK Health Psychology to the rest of Europe over the last six years and to reflect on the growth of our discipline. I hope that in my final year going forward, the links between the UK and our European and International Health Psychology friends can continue to grow as we share our experiences in the field more globally.

References

Johnston, M., Weinman, J. & Chater, A. (2011). A quarter century of health psychology. *The Psychologist*, 24, (12), 890-902.