

# **EHPS NATIONAL REPORT FOR 2018-2019 FROM UNITED KINGDOM**

## **Prof Jo Hart - UK National Delegate**

### **I) Health Psychology in the UK**

The development of Health Psychology in the UK continues is led by the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Health Psychology (DHP). Dr Angel Chater became the Chair of the DHP in July 2019, for two years.

There are currently 2183 members of the DHP - an increase of about 200 over the previous year. (682 Chartered; 1,248 general members; 231 'in training' (student) members).

Health care and legislation in relation to Health Psychology in the UK remains steady. There is strategic movement in Public Health towards Behavioural Science (that encompasses Health Psychology). The Behavioural and Social Science Strategy for Public Health in England was launched by Public Health England (PHE) in September 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-peoples-health-applying-behavioural-and-social-sciences> The strategy includes recommendations for embedding behavioural science (and health psychology) within public health research, training, service delivery, practice and policy. It also calls for the development of a 'community of practice' to enable those working in public health to gain more access to those with health psychology and behavioural science expertise.

### **II) Education, training & professionalization**

#### **1. Promotion of Health Psychology**

The DHP, the Health Psychology Qualifications Board and the DHP Training Committee continue to oversee education, training, professionalisation and promotion of Health Psychology in the UK. The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), regulates the discipline of Health Psychology (and other areas of applied psychology). Training must also confer to HCPC Standards of Proficiency <https://www.hcpc-uk.org> to enable the future practice of Health Psychology. Advertising of jobs for health psychologists working in the NHS continues to be an issue. Sometimes, jobs are advertised for which health psychologists would fulfil the competencies; but the job advert requires a clinical psychologist. Professional insurance and indemnity remains to be through either the employer (i.e. Higher Education/ NHS) or private indemnity through companies such as Howdens and Towergate. Practitioners, supervisors and trainees must ensure they have appropriate cover for their work.

#### **2. Education and Training Initiatives/Programmes**

Training requirements are an undergraduate psychology degree (usually 3 years full-time equating to 360 UK credits/ 180 ECTS points) which offers Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society (BPS), followed by a 1 year full-time (or part-time equivalent) BPS accredited MSc in Health Psychology (180 UK credits at M level/ 90 ECTS points) leading to the Stage 1 qualification in Health psychology. Followed by a period of 2 years of Doctoral level supervised practice in Health Psychology (Stage 2), equating to 37.5/40 hours per week for 46 weeks per year or part-time equivalent. During this time, candidates must show competency in the key areas of generic professional practice, research, teaching/training, consultancy and psychological interventions/behaviour change. Stage 2 can be achieved via either a university-route doctorate, or via the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology independent training route. Through the independent route, trainees are independently supervised by a suitably qualified Health Psychologist to gain the competencies through a BPS agreed training plan. For this, supervisors must be registered on the Register of Applied Practice Psychology Supervisors

(RAPPS) and students can study alongside a PhD. There are currently 36 MSc Health Psychology courses accredited by the British Psychological Society and 5 accredited Doctoral level Stage 2 training programmes (see here for more information: <https://www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accredited-courses>)

### **III) Activities**

#### **1. Conferences and meetings**

The DHP 2019 Annual Conference, was held on the 10-11 July in Manchester. Keynote speakers were Professor Neil Coulson and Professor Katherine Brown. The annual conference has historically been held in September each year, this is the first time it has been in July. We also moved to a two day format. Attendance increased and feedback was very positive. The 2020 conference is scheduled for 23-24 June in Bristol.

There are also annual AGMs with associated academic meetings from the Devolved Nations for DHP Northern Ireland (May) and DHP Scotland (February) which are well attended. Other noteworthy conferences that cover health psychology research and practice are the

- a. UK Society for Behavioural Medicine (UKSBM: <http://www.uksbm.org.uk/>) annual conference, next conference in Bath in 2020 *and*
- b. Behavioural Sciences in Public Health Network <https://www.bsphn.org.uk> whose annual conference was held this year in February 2019 with the theme 'Health, Well-Being & Behavioural Science; Building Successful Partnerships'

#### **2. Publications**

The DHP produces a regular divisional peer-reviewed publication called the Health Psychology Update (HPU), which goes out to all members of the DHP. This year, there was an online issue of HPU for DHP members, with conference abstracts. <https://t.co/0mJKihCmaZ?ssr=true>. The British Psychological Society also support a Divisional publication; the British Journal of Health Psychology (BJHP). This journal has an impact factor of 2.472 is published by Wiley and currently led by DHP members Professor Maddy Arden and Dr Joe Chilcot. The BJHP allows for open access, and currently the charge for this is waived to all DHP members who are accepted for publication following peer-review.

#### **3. Working groups**

The DHP national committee have leads for research, practice, policy, communications, trainees, education & training and conference, to ensure that the diverse needs of health psychologists and trainees are met.

#### **4. Other activities**

The DHP Twitter account is growing year on year and in August 2019 has 6,821 followers. All welcome to follow on @divhealthpsych

#### **5. Planned/future activities and initiatives**

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: <https://www1.bps.org.uk/networks-and-communities/member-microsite/division-health-psychology>

#### **6. Other issues/news**

There has been a fee reduction for stage 2 training recently but costs are still high. There are ongoing discussions about finding funding for stage 2 training.

We were delighted that one of our leading health psychologists in the UK, Viv Swanson, won the BPS award for distinguished contribution to psychological practice. <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/two-pioneers-share-bps-award-distinguished-contribution> in recognition of her amazing work in driving funded health psychology training in Scotland.

Linked with national priorities and consultation papers around health and workforce (e.g. <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s-consultation-document>), there are now discussions about a Chief Psychological Professions Officer who would have a key role in providing psychological expertise, signposting to psychology evidence and experts, lobbying for roles and support, for advancing the profession and negotiating resource including for research. This proposal is led by the BPS with a number of other stakeholders.

The BPS has some great reads that are available to all – <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/listing> and <https://digest.bps.org.uk>

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