

EHPS NATIONAL REPORT FOR 2016-2017 FROM UNITED KINGDOM

Dr Angel Chater - UK National Delegate

I) Health Psychology in the UK

The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Health Psychology (DHP) continues to support the development of Health Psychology in the UK, currently under the lead of Professor Karen Rodham. The incoming Chair for September 2017 will be Dr Jo Hart, and the DHP have changed their terms of office for this role to a 4-year term (1 year Chair Elect, 2 years Chair, 1 year past Chair) to ensure continuity and support.

There have been no real changes in the health care or legislation in relation to Health Psychology in the UK since the last report. However, there is work currently ongoing to develop a National Behavioural and Social Science Strategy for Public Health with Public Health England, the Association for the Directors of Public Health (ADPH), the Division of Health Psychology (DHP) and the Health Psychology and Public Health Network (HPPHN) as lead stakeholders. I am currently the Chair for the HPPHN and we expect one outcome of this strategy to be guidance on including health psychology-related training to those working within public health but not routinely training in behavioural science.

The DHP have achieved a significant change in the eligibility for full DHP membership following a proposal for a resolution by Professor Marie Johnston at the AGM in 2016. The DHP have now been granted permission by the BPS to widen access to full membership for academics working in the field of health psychology. Traditionally, full membership of the DHP was granted to those who had completed both Stage 1 and Stage 2 training, focusing on research, teaching, and practice. However, this excluded academics who may have completed a PhD in Health Psychology, but who have not completed an MSc or the Stage 1 qualifying exam and/or Stage 2 training. In principle, those with a PhD in Health Psychology will now also be eligible for full membership of the DHP ensuring the access is equitable for both academics and practitioners alike.

Membership to the DHP in August 2017 was 2,077 members (1,040 Chartered; 1,014 Graduate; 10 Student; 14 Subscribers), an increase from 1,980 in the summer of 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).

II) Education, training & professionalization

Currently, to train as a Health Psychologist in the UK, trainees must complete 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. There are currently 31 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>). Trainees then complete a period of 2 years full time (equating to 37.5/40 hours per week for 46 weeks per year or part-time equivalent) doctoral level supervised practice in Health Psychology (Stage 2) which must show competency in the key areas of generic professional practice, research, teaching/training, consultancy and psychological interventions/behaviour change. Following completion of Stage 2 training, trainees are eligible to apply for full membership of the Division of Health Psychology (DHP) and Chartered Status with the BPS. This training should also meet the Standards of

Proficiency (SoPs) needed to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a legal requirement to be able to practice and legally use the term 'Health Psychologist' in the UK. Stage 2 can be studied through either a university route (Doctorate in Health Psychology [DHealthPsych] or PhD), of which there are 7 BPS accredited university 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 Register of Applied Practice Psychology Supervisors (RAPPS) and students can study alongside a PhD. Assessment for Stage 2 is via a portfolio of work and an oral viva, those undergoing the PhD or Doctorate university route will also receive the Dr status, those through the independent route will not unless they combine with an independent PhD registration. There are funded opportunities for stage 2 places across the UK, often linked to research grants or departmental resources. In 2007 we saw the first funded places for Health Psychology training (Stage 2) through the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and Health Boards to meet NHS Scotland health improvement targets. This continues to date.

The practice of Health Psychology in the UK is regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) <http://hpc-uk.org>. The protected title is 'Practitioner Psychologist' and there are 7 key areas, Health Psychology is one of them. To maintain a practicing certificate and stay on the register, psychologists must be able to evidence continuing professional development (CPD). A small percentage are audited each year. The BPS provide an online system to log CPD. Prior to 2009, the BPS were the regulators of psychology practice in the UK. Now, the HCPC essentially protect the public and the BPS protect psychologists.

Health Psychologists work in many sectors in the UK and insurance will vary depending on these. Those working in academia and research will be covered by University Public Liability Insurance. Those working in the NHS will be covered by their relevant policies. Those working in private practice are required to obtain their own insurance. The BPS recommend Howdens and Towergate, however, there are others that offer up to £10million in cover for around £80-£100 per year to deliver health psychology services, including counselling, behaviour change, training and research. Trainees are also required to have insurance and this is specifically requested in their enrolment for the BPS Independent Route whereby they should obtain their own policy. Supervisors of trainees not undergoing this work through a HEI or work setting should also have their own valid indemnity policies.

III) Activities

Health Psychology research in the UK is mainly disseminated through the DHP annual conference held this year in Cardiff from the 6th to 8th September 2017. The conference is entitled, *Health Psychology: Theory and Practice*. Keynote speakers include: Professor Paul Flowers (Glasgow Caledonian University; talking on anti-microbial resistance), Professor Anne Kazak (Sidney Kimmel Medical School of Thomas Jefferson University; talking on family psychosocial risk screening in pediatrics) and Professor Jane Ogden (University of Surrey; talking on the impact of language and context on symptoms). Other noteworthy conferences that cover health psychology research and practice is the UK Society for Behavioural Medicine (UKSBM: <http://www.uksbm.org.uk/>) annual conference, this year held in Liverpool on the 13th-14th December 2017 and the Health Psychology in Public Health Network (www.hpphn.org.uk), whose annual conference with a focus on behaviour change was held on the 20th February 2017. Professor Marie Johnston opened the event with a keynote on 'Making Behavioural Science fit for Behaviour Change Interventions'. Other guest speakers included Amanda Bunten from Public Health England on their Insights Approach to Population Level Behaviour Change and Dr Wendy Lawrence on Healthy Conversation Skills.

A key journal in the UK is the British Journal of Health Psychology, which now has an impact factor of 2.551; Professor Alison Wearden and Professor David French remain the current editors. The Division of Health Psychology also publishes the Health Psychology Update (HPU), which goes out to all members of the DHP and is managed by the Publicity and Liaison Sub-committee.

The DHP Twitter account is growing year on year and in August 2017 it had 5,297 followers (up from 4,277 in 2016; 3,359 in 2015 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.

I) Other issues

In April 2017, as part of the work around the National Behavioural and Social Science Strategy for Public Health, a webinar on the Role of Behavioural Science in Public Health was delivered for the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADHP). Alongside this a quick guide to the role of behavioural sciences (including health psychology) was developed, generating further debate and interest in this area.

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>

Dr Angel Chater
Registered Health Psychologist (HCPC); Chartered Psychologist (BPS)



Reader in Health Psychology and Behaviour Change
Faculty of Education and Sport,
Department for Sport Science and Physical Activity,
University of Bedfordshire,
Bedford Campus,
Polhill Avenue,
Bedford,
MK41 9EA

E-mail: angel.chater@beds.ac.uk

Tel: 01234 793493

Webpage: <http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/departments/physical/about-us/staff/angel-chater>