



Professional Standards Annual Report 2020

Membership

Francesca Calvocoressi (Director since May 2019), Silvina Diaz Bonino, Eve Grainger (Employment Standards Lead), Jo Goldsmith (Chair of Ethical Practice Group), Tanya Leonard, Louise O'Dwyer (CPD, since February 2020), Selina Perocevic (Accreditation of Prior Learning), Helen Ritzema (Independent Practice representative) and Janet Shaw (Registrar since March 2020).

Role and Functions

The Professional Standards Committee has continued to meet bi-monthly to consider professional issues and to set and oversee the professional standards for the work of child psychotherapists. It has two main aims: to ensure that the public is protected and to support ACP members to achieve and maintain the highest standards of professional practice. The key functions of the committee are:

- The annual registration of members and on-going issues of membership.
- The collection and monitoring of the annual CPD returns and annual audit.
- Providing advice for members about their practice in terms of the professional code and to handle complaints, disciplinary procedures and sanctions.
- The presentation and acceptance of newly qualified members for ACP membership
- The management of applicants who wish to join the ACP without a training from an ACP accredited Training School.
- The setting of standards for the employment of ACP members and liaison with employers.

Activities, achievements and developments 2019-2020

Due to the volume of work, a decision was made by the board to split the of post of Registrar into three separate but linked posts, comprising a director (Francesca Calvocoressi), a Registrar (Janet Shaw) and a CPD Lead (Louise O'Dwyer).

Whilst we recruited to the role, the post was covered by Claire Whitefield who acted as interim registrar between March 2019 and February 2020. Janet Shaw took on the role of Registrar from March 2020.

In addition to the annual and ongoing work of the committee, a number of new policies were developed within PSC and adopted by the ACP Board, or began development:

- Revised Disciplinary Procedures (see Section on Ethical Practice Group).
- Revised Independent Practice Guidelines (see Section on Independent Practice Group).
- Safeguarding Policy (see Section on Safeguarding).
- Adjunctive Therapies (see Section on Adjunctive Therapies).
- Duty of Candour (see Section on Duty of Candour).

Registration

The process of online CPD returns and registrations went well and the office team are to be thanked for their support and hard work in enabling this to run smoothly. The current membership comprises:

- Full members- 632
- Honoured full members- 9
- Honoured not working members - 3
- Newly qualified members – 38
- Not working members -104
- Overseas members – 52
- Trainee members - 152

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Claire Whitefield, former CPD Lead, stepped down in February 2020. Louise O'Dwyer has now taken on the CPD lead role from February 2020. All members continue to complete an online CPD submission as part of the process of re-registering each year. This submission is verified by the member's clinical supervisor. The CPD guidelines, which were updated in 2019 and are available on the website, provide information on requirements for core skills (clinical work), clinical and general CPD and supervision.

During the CPD period (for 2018- 2019) all full members submitted their forms on time. There were a number of queries about CPD requirements. In particular, some members not having access, or sufficient access (for those newly qualified) to an ACP registered supervisor. In these cases, the supervision was usually provided by very experienced and child analysts, who were not ACP members. This has been resolved by creating a new category of supervising associates, who pay a small fee to be on the register as supervisory associates.

To be an ACP approved supervisor, it is necessary to be a full member, not a retired member. This can be difficult for some members who are teaching and supervising, but no longer working clinically. There were also some queries from members who are still full members (for the reasons of teaching and supervision) but who are not able to meet the CPD clinical requirements (due to retirement, speciality working etc). It has been acknowledged that there may be a need for some members to take a break from clinical work in particular situations. The professional standards association are forming a sub- group to look more closely at supervision standards and issues around supervisor registration. A category of 'teaching and supervising only' may be revived.

Each year around 5% of full members are selected to take part in the CPD audit. They provide a fuller account of their CPD log, reflect on how their learning has helped their development as child psychotherapists and provide evidence in the form of certificates/letters, etc. for activities. It is a necessary requirement for child psychotherapists who wish to remain registered with the ACP to complete this audit and it enables our continued registration with the PSA. Members are reminded to keep an annual log of CPD activities (a list of activities, including certificates or similar evidence) and to keep hold of their CPD documents when they change employment, email address or move house. In addition, where a member's supervisor leaves the service, it is the member's responsibility to ensure that they meet the minimum number of hours for supervision over the course of the year.

The 2019 audit returns (for year 2017-2018) reflected an energised and committed professional group, working to a high level of CPD. Core skills accounts involved descriptions of thoughtful and in-depth work with children and families often with very complex needs. Members worked with the network, with risk and safeguarding issues appropriately. Supervision continued to be strongly valued by the majority of members. Several respondents were advised to change or increase supervision arrangements for next year. Delivering supervision and teaching continued to be an important way of learning for the membership. Members challenged themselves by learning in specialist areas and taking on new roles and activities. There was a strong sense, from the findings, of the profession's coherence and community as ACP child psychotherapists and of its commitment to develop thinking and practice in response to clinical and service needs.

Generally, the response to the audit was positive. One member described the process as time-consuming but also 'a vigorous process to ensure that professionals continue to learn and develop.' Several respondents had difficulties finding their CPD documents, one being unable to provide these fully within the audit period. This led to the

member being removed from the register and her supervisor being informed, but she has since reregistered and the requirements set out by the Registrar and CPD lead have been met. A small number of members were noticeably less involved with colleagues and less engaged in CPD; this was partly linked to working only a small number of hours. The ACP continues to support members to join with others (e.g. through events, ACP committees, supported clinical networks) and to access opportunities for learning (by organising courses, events and an annual conference). Visits were made to ACP training schools this year which addressed both these issues, to encourage members to be involved with colleagues and the ACP and to inform of the CPD process and requirements. A number of comments from members were made about the policy and audit process (some seeking further clarity, others suggestions - whether requirements could be pro rata for hours worked, if feedback would be provided on an individual level); these will be discussed in the PSC.

Safeguarding training

All Members are required to undertake level 3 safeguarding training every 3 years. Members confirm on registration that this is kept up to date and certificates should be added to their CPD log maintained to be presented when selected for audit. Both the ACP and the Tavistock Clinic run courses in level 3 safeguarding which can be helpful to members who do not have access to this training through their employment. The latest safeguarding training put on by the ACP was well attended, and created sufficient demand for additional dates to be provided. The PSA will be considering whether members will need to provide certification of safeguarding trainings for all ACP members' CPD returns to help members achieve compliance.

We would like to thank the members that completed audit returns this year, the office team and the auditors for their assistance.

Claire Whitefield, CPD Lead

Ethical Practice Group

The prime function of the Ethical Practice Group is to ensure that that the ACP should have the means to protect and be seen to protect the public in general and its patients in particular, from breaches of its ethical code. In addition, it also needs to guard against the reputational damage and lack of public confidence in the profession. Thirdly it aims to protect the membership from complainants by encouraging adherence to the Rules of the Association and The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

The process of thinking about complaints is a salutary experience and I often find myself reflecting on my own vulnerabilities. Sometimes the nature of the mistakes are such that any of us might have fallen into the same errors. I would like to suggest that it may be important to consider our own defenses including fantasies of omnipotence to ensure that we follow due process and work within the Code of Professional Standards and Ethics.

Complaints

During the past 12 months there have been 6 new complaints and one concern about whether a member is fit to practice. Three of these complaints were not taken any further because it was decided by the Screening Panel that none of them met the required criteria for investigation.

One complaint is currently under investigation to consider whether the member concerned may have breached the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. Two complaints followed the Disciplinary Procedure. One of these was from January 2019. In both cases the member was found to have breached the code of Professional Standards and Ethical Practice. Appropriate sanctions were put in place in both cases. Further information is available on the [website](#).

Supporting members

The Chair of the Ethical Practice Group often gives members a space to think about particular challenges of their work though an ethical lens. This is available to all members although they should attempt to resolve issues with their clinical supervisor and be familiar with the relevant documents before requesting such a consultation. A recurrent theme is consent to share information. This is a particular issue for members working independently who need to be mindful of the ACP advice and the legal position as stated by the GDPR legislation.

New Disciplinary Code

The new Disciplinary Procedure was been approved by the Board in July 2019. A slight alteration was made in November and the most current version, January 2020, is available on the website. Members are encouraged to be familiar with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics and the Disciplinary Procedure. There were two significant changes to the Disciplinary Procedure; the inclusion of a practice review and the possibility of an interim suspension. These additions were made in response to the PSA during the process of reaccreditation and incorporates learning from the experiences of the Ethical Practice Group.

- a. The Practice Review will enable some complaints to be dealt with in simpler, more straightforward and less litigious way. This will enable the ACP to engage with the PSA ‘Right Touch’ approach and facilitate a learning and educational element to the more mild complaints.
- b. The power to impose interim measures at any point between preliminary consideration of the complaint and the final decision on the complaint in order to protect the public against a risk of harm in the light of the nature and seriousness of the complaint and / or the complaint involves criminal charges being brought against the Member. This would be implemented only in relation to the most serious of allegations.

Group membership

It is perhaps inevitable that after a period of stability the membership of the Ethical Practice group is now going through some personnel changes. We have said goodbye to 3 lay members: Larry Kaplan, Rob Wall and Sue Batcheler, and two child psychotherapists, Helen Randall and Barbara Segal. I am grateful to each of them for the careful and thoughtful way they have implemented the disciplinary procedure in highly complex situations and for the time they have dedicated to ensure that all those involved have had an opportunity to voice their view. It is a privilege to chair this group of lay members and child psychotherapists who give of their time to engage in some of the fundamental matters in dealing with protection of the public. The level of consideration and debate is invaluable and enriching and I hope has long term benefits for the membership. I am grateful for the ongoing support of the group and the professional staff of the ACP. If any members wish to consider joining this group, then I would be pleased to have a conversation with them. The role description is available on the website. It has been a pleasure to welcome some new members: Gill Hardman and Erica Bradley are both new lay members who bring a wealth of experience from other organisations. Geraldine Crehan and Emily Ryan are both experienced and thoughtful child psychotherapists who are joining the group.

Jo Goldsmith, Chair of Ethical practice Group

Contribution from the ACP Employment Standards Group to the Professional Standards Committee Annual Report

This has been a very interesting year for the Employment Standards Group (ESG). In addition to our usual activities we have been very preoccupied with the issue of how to support career progression and leadership skills in the profession. We held a workshop on this topic at the 2019 Annual Conference which, for a lunchtime meeting, had good attendance, and those present were very engaged with the issues. From that we have been able to identify a number of areas in relation to leadership and career progression about which members are concerned.

To ascertain interest in the wider ACP membership we have compiled a member survey on Career Progression and Leadership, which is currently being trialled by members of the ESG, the Professional Standards Committee, and the Operations and Liaison Committee. As soon as we have had the responses to the trial, the survey will be circulated to the membership. Further developments will then take the lead from the answers to the survey.

The Spring 2020 issue of the ACP Bulletin has career progression and leadership as its theme, and the ESG co-ordinated a number of articles to be included, as well as responding in the “Common Concern” section to a member’s query about lack of career opportunities in their area.

Support for members

In relation to the ongoing work of the Group we have continued to provide assessors for senior recruitment panels, together with advice about re-banding, appropriate job descriptions and support for members who are in difficult employment situations. This has included support for members who have applied for senior leadership positions but have been unsuccessful in being appointed. The overall message from these situations, and from attendance at

recruitment panels, is that, on the whole, child psychotherapists are not sufficiently outward facing from the profession and clinical work. This means that they often do not take on board the position of child psychotherapy in relation to the wider CAMHS service and national CAMHS agendas.

This has given rise to the ESG thinking that one of the areas that it would be very helpful for the ACP to develop is a competence framework in relation to leadership. This is something that we are in the process of proposing.

Importance of assessors for appointment panels

It came to light in the autumn of 2019 that senior members of the profession did not appear to be aware of the ACP policy to have assessors present at the recruitment panels for senior posts. Two articles were then published in the Newsletters of September and November, one drawing members' attention to the need for assessors to be requested for recruitment panels for senior posts, and the second alerting members to the role of the Employment Standards Group and the different functions that it performs. However, despite this, various senior leadership posts have continued to be advertised without an assessor having been requested. It is therefore a challenge to try to think about how to ensure that communications are seen and taken in by the membership.

Employment in non-NHS settings

Another issue that has been raised with the Group is the need for employment criteria to be clarified in relation to independent and third sector child psychotherapy organisations. Work is currently ongoing with the Independent Practice Group to address this.

Links with the union

The Group's position as part of the Professional Standards Committee has proved very helpful in providing a structure within which issues around potential conflict of interest at recruitment panels could be explored and clarified. The Group continues to have a close and very effective relationship with the ACP Unite representatives.

COVID-19 and the future

At the time of writing, because of the COVID-19 virus, the future is incredibly unclear, but, in view of the decision for the continued funding of the child psychotherapy training, and the fact that that work has brought together parts of the ACP which previously were operating independently, the future is looking very interesting, and potentially, exciting.

Eve Grainger, ACP Lead for Employment Standards

Independent Practice

The most significant piece of work completed during 2019/20 has been the update to the [Independent Practice Guidelines](#). Huge thanks go to Lucy Mills and Judith Golberg who undertook this task. As a group we continue to be only too aware of how difficult starting out in private practice can be. The guidelines, supported and adopted by the ACP Board, are one way in which the group hopes to support those starting out in private practice. The other notable struggle is how hard it can be to find time in a busy independent practice to meet and support others, and to feed into the work of the ACP. To this end there is a wish to support, over the next year, the setting up of regional groups, which the ACP is working to develop. We very much value the support of the ACP for independent practitioners and our representation on ACP committees has certainly helped to maintain valuable connections providing us with a voice as well as ensuring there is a forum for the work of the ACP to be disseminated directly into the IPG.

Another area highlighted in last year's annual report regarding the title of 'Consultant', remains under discussion. Over the last year 2019, Ryan Lowe, who very generously stepped back up again to co-chair alongside Leslie Ironside last year has now stepped down. Leslie Ironside now resides as sole chair. Lucy Mills has stepped down from her role representing the IPG on the Professional Standards Committee and Helen Ritzema has now taken over this position. Katie Lewis represents the IPG on the Ethical Practice Group and the Operations and Liaison Committee. Judith Golberg has stepped down from the group as has Valerie Allison. We wish to thank Ryan, Judith and Valerie for their valued contributions to the group. With a wish to maintain a good number of active members within the committee as well as regional representation we are pleased to report Paul Bell and Zah Ngah have joined the group.

Helen Ritzema, Representative from the Independent Practice

Safeguarding

We made significant progress this year in supporting members to be compliant with Level 3 Safeguarding. The ACP organised three courses which were well attended, and which received positive feedback.

Safeguarding is always in the forefront of our practice, not only for those in clinical practice clinicians, but also for teachers and supervisors. Tanya Leonard (without portfolio) who joined the PSC last year, is currently working on scoping the potential roles and responsibilities of a future an ACP Safeguarding Lead. An ACP Lead is shortly to be announced.

Adjunctive Therapies

As requested by the PSA, the Professional Standards Committee has reviewed the ACP's approach to the provision of adjunctive therapies by members. A new item (2i) has been added to the PSA Risk Matrix in relation to this which identifies several actions to control or mitigate the identified risks. New guidance will be issued to members.

Definition of Adjunctive Therapies.

An adjunctive therapy is defined as a secondary intervention used concurrently with a primary intervention to enhance treatment effectiveness. Adjunctive Therapies are treatments that are offered to members of the public that fall outside the [ACP Competence Framework](#) and are therefore not covered by members' registration and the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. This might include treatments such as adult psychotherapy, EMDR, CBT, Mindfulness or Meditation. These treatments may form an important part of some ACP members' practice: the issue is that the public must not be misled into believing that the ACP has any regulatory function in relation to them.

Duty of candour

The PSA also identified Duty of Candour as an issue that needed to be addressed by the ACP. This has been considered and additional wording has been drafted for inclusion in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics which clarifies that registrants have a professional duty of candour which they must adopt in order to justify public trust and confidence by being honest and trustworthy. It will state that they must show respect for their patients, including by being honest and open with them when something has gone wrong with their provision of care, which causes or has the potential to cause, harm or distress. The precise wording is due to be agreed at the next meeting of the Professional Standards Committee and will then be communicated to members.

Francesca Calvocoressi
Director Professional Standards Committee