



Functions and Job descriptions for the Ethical Practice Group

1. Background

The Ethical Practice Group (EPG) is concerned with the task of raising and maintaining professional standard in relation to child psychotherapy in the UK. It operates at the interface of the profession with the public and is concerned with clinical work and professional reputation.

The EPG is a sub-group of Professional Standards Committee and is accountable to that committee which is led by the Director of Professional Standards. The Chair/Lead of the EPG attends the PSC committee meetings and provides information and feedback on complaints and ethical matters to the committee as well as ensuring that relevant issues raised by the Professional Standards Committee are given due consideration by the EPG.

There are four key areas that this group is concerned about within the context of ACP registered child psychotherapists:

- protection of the public,
- protection of the profession,
- protection of the professional association.
- protection of members,

1.1 The Ethical Practice Group has four key functions:

1.1.1 To manage complaints against members that are brought to its notice in accordance with the procedure set out in the Disciplinary Code for the ACP and other relevant documents.

1.1.2 To administer the Serious Impairment to Fitness to Practice Procedure

1.1.3 To identify the lessons that may be learned from the complaints and other concerns that have been investigated and share this information with the membership

1.1.4 To give guidance and advice in relation to any ethical issues concerning the profession of child psychotherapy.

2. The composition of the Ethical Practice Group

2.1 The composition of the Ethical Practice Group is as follows:

2.1.1 Chair/ Lead

- 2.1.2 Deputy Chair /Lead
- 2.1.3 A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 child psychotherapy members
- 2.1.4 A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 lay members

3. Role description for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy members of the Ethical Practice Group

- 3.1 To investigate and adjudicate as part of a panel upon potential breaches of the Association's Code that are brought to its notice in accordance with the procedure set out in the Disciplinary Code for the ACP and other relevant documents.
- 3.2 To administer the Serious Impairment to Fitness to Practice Procedure
- 3.3 To identify the lessons that may be learned from the complaints and other concerns that have been investigated and shares this information with the membership
- 3.4 To give guidance upon, advise and/or report upon any ethical issue concerning the profession of child psychotherapy.
- 3.5 To attend three meetings a year of the Ethical Practice Group.
- 3.6 To adhere to the data protection guidance.
- 3.7 As a member of the EPG to contribute to a discussion regarding any necessary amendments to the Code or the Disciplinary procedure.

4. Role description for lay-member(s) of Ethical Practise Group

- 4.1 A lay member of the Ethical Practice Group is one who is not, and has never been a child and adolescent psychotherapist. S/he does not have specialized or professional knowledge as a child psychotherapist.

- 4.2 Lay members play an essential role in maintaining public, as well as other stakeholder's, confidence in the decisions taken by the group, and act as balance to ensure that decisions (that) are made that protect the public interest.
- 4.3 To act in the public interest, by ensuring that complaints are considered fully and represent to the Ethical Practice Group a view that might be taken by people outside the profession on the member's behaviour . At the same time, lay members will appreciate that, for many child psychotherapists, having a complaint made against them is, in most cases, very stressful, particularly as disciplinary action may be prejudicial to their career prospects if charges are found proved.

5. Responsibilities of all members

- 5.1 A commitment to develop a good working knowledge of the EPG's (Professional Standards Committees) role and processes;
- 5.2 A willingness to take up a role on behalf of the EPG (The Professional Standards Committee.)
- 5.3 To carry out their duties for the EPG (Professional Standards Committee) in accordance with the EPG's (Professional Standards) terms of reference;
- 5.4 Conflicts of interest: Members of the Ethical Practice Group shall play no part in investigations of complaints where there is, or could reasonably appear to be, a conflict between their own professional or personal interests, including a prior relationship with any party to a complaint and their obligations to fairly and thoroughly investigate and determine disciplinary matters under this policy.

6. Core competencies of all members

Committee members are expected to:

- 6.1 have good communication, intellectual and analytical skills
- 6.2 have experience of interviewing in sensitive contexts
- 6.3 have experience of evaluating evidence and complex communications to enable the formulation of objective decisions

- 6.4 have an appreciation of, and commitment to protecting, promoting, and maintaining the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public.
- 6.5 previous experience of committee work.

7. Term of office

- 7.1 The unpredictable fluctuations in the work of the Ethical Practice Group is such that it is beneficial for members to be prepared to join the committee for a longer period of time than might be the case for other ACP groups. A central feature of the group is learning from the experience of other members of the group. The term of office for all members of the Ethical Practice Group is usually four years. Members may serve a further four years with the agreement of the Professional Standards Committee, for a maximum of two consecutive terms. They may be selected or co-opted for membership again after a break of not less than one year.

In order to maintain the stability of the Ethical Practice Group and to ensure there is a continued level of experience, there may be times when it is in the best interests of the Association for some members to continue to serve beyond the eight year period for an agreed length of time until additional members have been recruited.

- 7.2 Any member of the Ethical Practice Group may resign by giving one month's written notice to the Chair of the Ethical Practice Group.
- 7.3 When a child psychotherapist vacancy occurs, the committee role will be advertised to all ACP members and they will be invited to apply by supplying a CV and attending an interview. If appropriate, a member may apply for a further term of office subject to the approval of the EPG Chair/Lead and the Director of Professional Standards.
- 7.4 In the event that the membership of the Ethical Practice Group falls below 12 as a result of the death or resignation of an existing member or lay member, the current Chair of the Ethical Practice Group will consult with the Director of Professional Standards about recruiting new members quickly and/or co-opting previous members.

8. Frequency of meetings and commitment to the role

- 8.1 Meetings of the Ethical Practice Group are three times a year for two hours. (They usually follow a termly pattern.)

- 8.2 Members of the EPG will need to be available to take part in Investigation panels and Disciplinary panels as described in the Disciplinary Code.
- 8.3 There is an expectation:
 - 8.3.1 of strong commitment to the role for all members;
 - 8.3.2 of regular attendance at the meetings;
 - 8.3.3 that members will have read meeting papers in advance to be able to enter discussion about them;
 - 8.3.4 that all matters relating to the meetings will be kept confidential;
- 8.4 No member can act on his or her own on matters relating to the Committee without proper authority from the full committee.
- 8.5 The Ethical Practice Group will review its own effectiveness annually. The review will include whether the size and structure is fit for purpose and any proposed changes will be presented to the Professional Standards Committee.

9.0 Role description for the Ethical Practice Group Lead/Chair

- 9.1 To chair the EPG meetings which take place 3 times a year
- 9.2 To agree the agenda with the vice chair/Lead and Chair/ Director of the Professional Standards Committee .
- 9.3 To attend the PSC meetings (six times a year) and provide an annual report which can be included in the PSC annual report.
- 9.4 To report regularly to the Membership on lessons about good practice that have been learnt from investigations.
- 9.5 To liaise closely with the Director of the Professional Standards Committee in relation to:
 - membership issues
 - anticipated and immediate financial costs
- 9.6 To carry out correspondence as required
- 9.7 To share appropriate information with the Deputy Chair. This may include consideration of new complaints, issues concerning on-going complaints and other matters relevant to Ethical Practice.

- 9.8 To seek legal advice when and where appropriate, and in consultation with the Director of Professional Standards, in relation to on-going complaints and matters relevant to ethical practice. The procurement of legal advice must follow ACP Financial guidelines for managing costs within ACP budget lines and the raising of Purchase orders to track costs and payments.
- 9.9 Response to Complaints and Enquiries:
- 9.9.1 To respond to enquiries from members about their practise in a timely and efficient fashion
 - 9.9.2 To respond to potential complaints by anyone in the public, employers, and members of the Association **in accordance with the Code**
 - 9.9.3 As part of a screening group to make an initial enquiry into the nature and context of any complaints
 - 9.9.4 To undertake all duties described in the Disciplinary Procedures.
 - 9.9.5 To consult with the Director of Professional standards regarding any information reported that may indicate that a member's fitness to practise is seriously impaired by reason of a physical or mental disability (including addiction) or an illness in line with the ACP Fitness to Practice guidelines.
 - 9.9.6 To ensure that the ACP investigations Record Retention and Destruction Policy is implemented and adhered to in an effective and timely manner.
 - 9.9.7 To ensure that lessons learnt from investigations and disciplinary hearings are shared with the membership in such a way that the confidentiality of specific members is protected but that there are opportunities to improve practice within the profession.
 - 9.9.8 In a timely manner to identify and introduce necessary modifications to the Ethical Code and The Disciplinary Procedures in discussion with the Director of the Professional Standards Committee.
- 9.10 To ensure that there is a continuation of membership of the Ethical Practice Group by anticipating changes and encouraging new members.

- 9.11 To provide guidance and support for new members undertaking investigations of complaints or disciplinary hearing.

10.0 Role description for the Ethical Practice Group Lead/Chair

- 10.1 Experience as a member of the Ethical Practice Group which will have included being a member of investigation panels and disciplinary panels.
- 10.2 More than 8 years working as a senior child psychotherapist with experience of organisational leadership and management responsibilities.
- 10.3 Good communication skills verbally and in written forms.
- 10.4 Ability to chair meetings efficiently and effectively.
- 10.5 Experience of evaluating evidence and making objective decisions.

11.0 Role description for the Deputy Ethical Practice Group Lead/Chair

- 11.1 To work with the Chair/ Lead of the Ethical Practice Group.
- 11.2 To contribute to the agenda for meetings
- 11.3 To support and train new members of the Ethical Practice group undertaking investigations.
- 11.4 To take on the responsibilities of the Lead/Chair in any case where the Chair is either the subject of a complaint or has a conflict of interests.