

Chair: Dr Anna van der Gaag  
Chief Executive and Registrar: Marc Seale

9 November 2009

Dear Colleague

### **Psychotherapists and counsellors Professional Liaison Group (PLG)**

We are writing to you about the work we are undertaking to explore and make recommendations about the potential statutory regulation of psychotherapists and counsellors.

The recent consultation on the recommendations of the PLG has received unprecedented interest with over 1,000 responses received, the majority from individual practitioners in the field. Our analysis of the responses we received is ongoing, but it is clear that a variety of different and strongly articulated views have been put forward which we need to properly take into account in determining the most appropriate way forward. In particular, the area of potential differentiation between psychotherapists and counsellors has drawn significant interest and debate.

As you know, the work of the PLG was originally planned to conclude before the consultation took place. However, an additional meeting was scheduled on 18/19 November 2009, primarily to look at responses to the draft standards of proficiency. In light of the unprecedented response to the consultation our analysis of the consultation responses is ongoing and the results will not be ready in time for the planned meeting. We need to conduct a thorough analysis to ensure the HPC Council is in an informed position to make its recommendations in light of the responses. We have decided to postpone the planned PLG meeting to enable us to do this.

The Council will meet on 10 December 2009 to consider the analysis from the consultation. HPC Council meetings are open to the public so if you would like to attend and observe the discussion you would be most welcome to do so. If you plan to attend, it would be helpful if you could inform our Secretariat Department by emailing [louise.hart@hpc-uk.org](mailto:louise.hart@hpc-uk.org).

Although this is of course properly a decision for the HPC Council to make, we anticipate at this stage, following the Council's considerations, that the PLG will be reconvened to undertake further work in revising the standards of proficiency in light of those considerations and in light of the many detailed comments we have received on the draft in the consultation. Continued professional and lay input into the standards of proficiency is essential in ensuring that we achieve a set of standards which reflect the competencies necessary on entry to the Register and which are framed in inclusive terminology appropriate to the field.

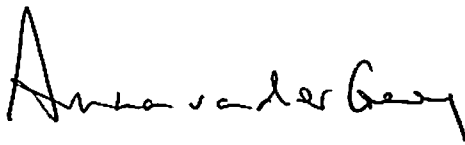
Subject to a decision from the Government to proceed with statutory regulation, we would consult again, following the publication of a Section 60 Order under the Health Act 1999, on the proposed standards of proficiency and educational threshold. As you may already know, the Department of Health would undertake a consultation on the draft Section 60 Order.

We recently attended the Westminster Hall debate convened by Anne Milton, MP, Shadow Minister for Health. There was a lively debate at the meeting about progress towards statutory regulation and some debate about the detail of the regulatory proposals. In particular, participants felt that there needed to be more opportunities for discussion with debate, both with HPC and within the field, about regulation. To this end, we plan to hold a series of events next year to engage with the wider field and these events will feed into the planned continuing work of the PLG.

Please accept our apologies for the late notice regarding this change to the schedule of the PLG.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for you and your organisation's involvement in this work to date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna van der Gaag'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Anna van der Gaag  
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Waller'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Diane Waller  
PLG Chair