



Regulation: The Background

Liz Plastow
Independent Advisor

The White Paper: Trust Assurance and Safety

The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century

- “7.2 The Government is planning to introduce statutory regulation for applied psychologists, psychotherapists and counsellors and other psychological therapists...”
- “7.16 Psychologists, psychotherapists and counsellors will be regulated by the Health Professions Council following that Council’s rigorous process of assessing their regulatory needs and ensuring that its system is capable of accommodating them. This will be the first priority for future regulation.”

The DH Vision

- To regulate applied psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists and other psychological therapists in the U K asap
- To link competencies to counsellors and psychotherapists roles as a basis for regulation.

Health Professions Council

- The White Paper states counsellors will be regulated by the Health Professions Council.
- The Government rejected the proposal of a Psychological Professions Council.
- The HPC currently regulates 13 professions including: Paramedics, Dieticians, Orthoptists, Physiotherapists and Radiographers.

Statutory Regulation?

- Where a profession is regulated by an independent council.
- Regulation is by protected title, e.g. counsellor - only people on the statutory register can legally use that title.
- Powers to add, remove and make conditions on people registration
- The council sets the criteria for registration including qualifications and codes of practice.

Standards of Proficiency

Threshold Standards for entry to Register

Two components:

- Shared
- Profession specific

Three Standards

- Expectations of a professional
- Skills required for application of practice
- Knowledge

Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics

- Apply to registrants & prospective registrants?
- Conduct- high standards personal conduct
- Performance – keep accurate patient, client and user records
- Ethics-behaves with integrity and honesty

HPC criteria for regulation of professions

- Apply a defined body of knowledge.
- Have independently assessed entry qualifications.
- Have defined routes of entry to the profession.
- Practice based on evidence of efficacy.
- Entry to the register is by completion of an approved qualification; approved by the HPC. Historically these are all HE qualifications

Current Training Provision

- Many courses delivered across range of providers – HE, FE and private providers.
- No single standard or qualification.
- Issues of quality assurance
- Many offer no formally accredited award.

Access to Register

- Transfer from existing Voluntary Register
- Qualification
- Grandparenting
- Professional Certificate of Competence

Options to Transfer to Register

- Regulatory Councils have allowed people on the registers of Professional Associations to transfer onto the Statutory Register on payment of the fee
- Unknown which qualifications will be approved- QA
- A grandparenting route usually open 2 – 3 years after register opens for those without approved qualification.
- Must have worked wholly or mainly for 3 out of the last 5 years legally in the profession, or if 'part time', 6 out of the last 10 years (17 hrs/week)
- HPC accepts a professional certificate of competence for biomedical scientists

Timetable for Registration

- The DH stated plans to start formal legislative processes of regulation in the Health Professions Council towards the end of 2008 or the beginning of 2009.
- The statutory register would open approximately 18 months later.
- Counselling and psychotherapy therefore are likely to be regulated in 2010-2011
- Moveable feast!!!