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British  
Psychological  
Society

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The Society has offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London, as well as the main office in Leicester. All enquiries should be addressed to the Leicester office (see inside front cover for address).

#### The British Psychological Society

was founded in 1901, and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its object is 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge'.  
*Extract from The Charter*



## President's column

Liz Campbell

Contact Liz Campbell via the Society's Leicester office, or e-mail: [president@bps.org.uk](mailto:president@bps.org.uk)

Why is summer always so busy? I prefer a European model where we could all shut down for a month. But the work of the Society proceeds throughout the year. The last few weeks have been very busy and fast moving on the statutory regulation front. We have had a very constructive meeting with the Health Professions Council (HPC); we have received two revised drafts of the Section 60 Order (the draft legislation); and we have had a joint meeting with the Department of Health, Scottish Executive, Health Professions Council and the Association of Educational Psychologists to undertake a line-by-line discussion of the revised draft legislation. These drafts have been seen by our lawyers, our Division Chairs, Representative Council and the Trustees. Our discussions have led to a number of significant

amendments being incorporated into the most recent version of the proposed legislation. A Special Meeting of Representative Council will take place on 4 September to move this forward.

It is expected that the legislation will be tabled in Westminster and Edinburgh in early October, that it will become law before Christmas and that the HPC will open the register in the late spring of 2009.

Our members contribute in many ways through research and practice to the benefit of society. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the impact of social science research on government in Britain has been patchy at best, non-existent at worst. Whilst individual academics, and some disciplines, have developed good links with policy-makers, there is a growing awareness we often do not do enough to disseminate research findings outside of the academic world. There may be many reasons for this collective failure, but there is also an awareness within government that sometimes they also don't do enough to reach out to the external research community, and that it's not easy for advice to reach the ears of those who need to hear it. The result has been a worrying separation of social science research and policy advice.

This was the rationale for the funding of an ESRC-placement in the Government Social Research Unit, based in HM Treasury. The GSRU coordinates the work of the Government Social Research professionals – around 1000

social scientists – across government. The post has just been filled by Philip Cowley, currently Professor of Parliamentary Government at the University of Nottingham. He will be spending the next nine months working in the Treasury, helping social science feed into policy-making.

The priority is to develop work flowing from the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit's February 2008 report *Realising Britain's Potential*. That report identified nine strategic challenges for the British government, from climate change to life chances, and from economic prosperity to democratic renewal. What is striking about *Realising Britain's Potential* is that nearly all of

the challenges are ones where social science – especially psychology – should have a key role to play.

Professor Cowley, whom I met at a recent government-sponsored lunch for learned societies, will be working on developing routes for academics to influence government policy. He describes his task as 'pimping for academics'. As he has put it: 'One of the principal challenges of this project will be to turn around the ways in which academia communicates with government, which are not always successful.' Academics often don't know to whom they should communicate their work, or in what format it should be sent. His advice is for researchers is to send a summary of their research findings (one side of A4) stating why their research might be useful to government. He can be contacted at [philip.cowley@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:philip.cowley@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk). This is an important development and I would urge colleagues to take advantage of this opportunity.

And finally, a big welcome to our new Director of Membership Support Services, Simon Bowen. A special thanks to Mike Laffan, who has done a great job looking after that Directorate during the interregnum.

"I would urge colleagues to take advantage of this opportunity"

## EVENTS DIARY

For a database of forthcoming events organised by the Society and other organisations, see [www.bps.org.uk/diary](http://www.bps.org.uk/diary).

To advertise your event, contact [psyadvert@bps.org.uk](mailto:psyadvert@bps.org.uk) or +44 116 252 9552.

## Penile plethysmography guidelines

The Society's Professional Practice Board has published a Working Party Report, *Penile Plethysmography: Guidance for Psychologists* (see [www.bps.org.uk/ppb](http://www.bps.org.uk/ppb)).

The Penile Plethysmograph (PPG), also known as phallometric assessment, is a procedure used to help ascertain a man's sexual interests. In forensic contexts, the PPG assessment has particular value in assisting with the assessment and treatment of men who have committed sexual or sexually motivated offences. Typically, this involves using stimuli relevant to sexual arousal to either inappropriate persons (e.g. a child) or inappropriate acts (e.g. rape) and, for comparison, appropriate consenting adult sexual behaviour.

The assessment has a number of purposes, which include informing case formulation, treatment planning, enhancing engagement, assessing treatment change, and informing risk management decisions. There is an extensive clinical and research evidence base underpinning its use (see Lalumiere & Harris, 1998, for responses to common questions about the assessment, and Marshall & Fernandez, 2003, for a comprehensive review of the evidence base underpinning its use).

Due to the nature of the procedure and its outcome, various ethical, clinical, legal and professional issues have emerged over the years that are

associated with the assessment. For example there are ethical issues arising from the type of stimuli used; clinical limits to the assessment findings; and issues about how such information should feature in legal proceedings. Such issues have demanded that rigorous professional standards are in place to ensure that those implementing the assessment do so confidently, competently and in a defensible manner.

A set of standards to guide professional practice was produced in 1994. These were the *BPS Professional Guidelines for Penile Plethysmography (PPG) Usage*. Since the introduction of these guidelines, PPG research, practice and technology have evolved. The *Penile Plethysmography: Guidance for Psychologists* (2008) has been produced to revise and develop previous guidelines in response to advances in the field over the last decade.

The guidance includes standards about PPG assessment procedures, equipment, stimuli, interpretation and reporting. In addition to previous guidance, specific advice is also provided about appropriate clinical purposes for using PPG; the selection and production of assessment stimuli; reporting findings and pre-assessment briefing.

The guidance was developed by the multi-agency Forensic Assessment of Sexual Arousal Forum (formerly the PPG User Forum), a professional support group for

psychologists using the PPG in forensic/clinical contexts. The guidance was informed by professional experience, associated professional guidelines, the relevant research literature and national and international experts.

The Chair, Christopher Dean, said: 'This guidance is an important enhancement to previous guidelines. The guidance recognises that standards of practice are necessary not only in the administration of the PPG, but also in its interpretation and reporting. The guidance is intended to provide psychologists with a clear understanding of the procedures required to administer, interpret and report the PPG appropriately, commensurate with recent developments in the field. Most importantly, this guidance is intended to give psychologists

confidence to administer this complex assessment in a manner that is defensible, ethical and responsive to the diversity of individuals being assessed.'

**If you use, or are interested in using, the PPG as part of your forensic clinical practice you may wish to contact the Forensic Assessment of Sexual Arousal Forum for further information. Please contact Professor Todd Hogue at [thogue@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:thogue@lincoln.ac.uk) or ring 01522 837391.**

### References

- Lalumiere, M.L., & Harris, G.T. (1998). Common questions regarding the use of phallometric testing with sexual offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research & Treatment*, 10, 227-237.
- Marshall, W.L., & Fernandez, Y.M. (2003). *Phallometric testing with sexual offenders: Theory, research and practice*. Brandon, VT: Safer Society Press.

## Society vacancies

### British Psychological Society Honorary General Secretary

See advert on p.813

Contact *Nichola Whitmore-Cooper* [nicwhi@bps.org.uk](mailto:nicwhi@bps.org.uk), 0116 252 9521

### Professional Conduct Board Board Members

To serve as a member of Conduct and Health Committees. Must be a Fellow or Associate Fellow of the Society with a clear disciplinary record. Previous involvement with the Society in a senior capacity would be an advantage. All travel and subsistence expenses met.

Contact *Christine O' Rourke* [christine.orourke@bps.org.uk](mailto:christine.orourke@bps.org.uk), 0116 252 9917

### Psychology Education Board, Standing Committee for Teaching of Psychology to Other Professions Committee Members

See advert on p.812

Contact *Kelly Auty* [kelaut@bps.org.uk](mailto:kelaut@bps.org.uk)

### Ethics Committee Chair

See advert on p.785

Contact *Christine Grant* [chrgra@bps.org.uk](mailto:chrgra@bps.org.uk), 0116 252 9918

The Society's Professional Practice Board has recently approved revised guidelines for psychologists working as independent practitioners. New sections have been included at the request of members. These include generic professional practice guidelines, data protection and record keeping, marketing, working from home, health and safety and an example contract. The guidelines are available to download via [www.bps.org.uk/ppb](http://www.bps.org.uk/ppb). Please send comments and feedback to [ppbchair@bps.org.uk](mailto:ppbchair@bps.org.uk).

## CONSULTATIONS ON PUBLIC POLICY

Responses were submitted to five consultations in July. Key points:

### **Safeguarding Children in Scotland Who May Have Been Trafficked (response to the Scottish Government)**

This document was identified as having a number of strengths, including the provision of important guidance on responding to the particular forms of abuse perpetrated against trafficked children. However, it was also considered that it would benefit from case examples outlining good practice in complex scenarios, greater attention to culturally sensitive practice, and clarification of research, training, monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.

### **The CAMHS Review: Next Steps to Improving the Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health of Children and Young People – Call for Evidence (response to the Department for Children, Schools and Families)**

This provided a clear overview of key issues for applied psychologists working in child and adult mental health services. However, the Society's response suggested the adoption of a more psychosocial approach, increased collaborative working between agencies, clearer care pathways for children and measurement of outcomes.

### **Higher Education at Work – High Skills: High Value (response to the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills)**

Suggested incentives to take STEM subjects (i.e. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) were particularly welcomed by the Society, as was the emphasis on closer partnership between academia and business and on local focus and response to skill problems. The aim of equipping graduates to be successful in a global marketplace was commended. The Society recommended that businesses should engage with students from the start of their academic careers and proposed more internships and secondments, the establishment of an Employer/Academic Forum, and working to secure employer contributions to funding for language acquisition.

### **Fair Play: A consultation on the Play Strategy – A commitment in the Children's Plan (response to the Department for Children, Schools and Families)**

This was particularly welcomed for its aim of improving the professional status of play practitioners. It was noted, however, that key psychological literature was not referenced, and it was suggested that greater consideration be paid to the fundamental qualities of play as a unique medium for promoting child development. Reviews of the training needs of play practitioners were recommended.

### **Looked After Children: Consultation on the draft scope (response to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

The draft scope was considered to provide a coherent and consistent approach to therapeutic intervention and resources for Looked After Children. Some specific subgroups were identified in the Society's response as meriting more individual consideration. The response also included discussion of the proposed outcome measures and some additional measures for inclusion.

*The preparation and submission of the Society's responses to consultations on public policy is coordinated by the Policy Support Unit (PSU). All members are eligible to contribute to responses and all interest is warmly welcomed. Please contact the PSU for further information ([psu@bps.org.uk](mailto:psu@bps.org.uk); 0116 252 9926/9577). Details of active and completed consultations are available at: [www.bps.org.uk/consult](http://www.bps.org.uk/consult).*