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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

Sue Gardner

Contact Sue Gardner via the Society's Leicester office, or e-mail: president@bps.org.uk

It was my sad duty to begin our Annual Conference in Stratford-upon-Avon this year with a minute's silence to mark the death of our Vice President, Dr Liz Campbell. Liz opened the Conference as President last year having just been diagnosed with breast cancer. She died a little over twelve months later despite the best treatment, care and support. Liz was clever and talented, warm and mischievous, witty and wise, conscientious and committed, thoughtful and caring. She contributed to the Society and to psychology in Europe and across the world in many ways over several years. Liz will never be forgotten and will be dearly missed. She leaves a son, Patrick, her mother, four brothers, nephews, nieces and all of us whose lives she enriched. I have written to her family to offer our thoughts and best wishes at this time of loss.

For my address at the conference I chose the topic 'The Future of the British Psychological Society'. I began with a brief overview of our first 100 years of existence then focused on the last decade during which we have become more business-like, our activities have expanded and our membership numbers have risen from 25,000 to over 49,000. The Society's current situation was then outlined to summarise our priorities, activities, sound financial basis and plans for the future. Our plans include developing more as a learned society, increasing services for members, growing the membership, expanding our sources of income and improving our communications.

I paid tribute to the hard work of volunteer members who chair member networks, contribute to consultations, work on Boards, committees and other groups, maintain and develop training, organise events and take part in a range of activities. Our staff support these activities and the Senior Management Team headed by our Chief Executive, Professor Ann Colley, ensure the smooth running of the organisation. There are many ways to make a contribution in either the short or long term. When the new website is up and running we hope that it will be easier to link members, activities and information more efficiently. The Annual Report will be available soon and this will give an impressive overview that I hope you will take the time to consider. We have much to be proud of.

"We are a flourishing organisation... I know that we can be optimistic"

As to the future it will partly be about 'more of the same'. The themes in our history are around developing the discipline, raising standards, recognising excellence, disseminating psychology and developing our Society as an organisation to support our activities. Our future will also be 'whatever we want to make it'. We will have new ideas, both proactive and reactive, as well as new demands and challenges. We are a flourishing organisation and whilst we can't be complacent I know that we can be optimistic.

The keynote speakers at the Annual Conference were all lively and thought-provoking. I especially enjoyed hearing the latest advances in fields that I don't usually come across. The Awards Ceremony enabled us to celebrate some magnificent achievements. The social events, including a BBQ and a Gala Dinner, encouraged old and new friends to enjoy each others company.

I'll await the feedback from conference attendees, but in my opinion the conference was a great success. Another triumph, I believe, for the Standing Conference Committee chaired by Emeritus Professor Ken Brown and the Society's Events Team led by Ruth Raven.

Next year's Annual Conference will be held on 4-6 May in Glasgow. As this was Liz's home we are considering how we might include a tribute to her as part of the event. Whilst facing the future we can still acknowledge what we have gained from the past.

SPECIAL MEETING

A Special General Meeting was held on 26 March 2010 at the Leicester office. The President, Sue Gardner, chaired the meeting and 14 members were present.

A ballot was held on the resolution 'That the Royal Charter, Statutes and Rules be amended as presented in the draft of 24/2/2010, subject to any changes advised by the Privy Council.'

The Honorary General Secretary, Professor Pam Maras, declared the resolution to be supported, with 14 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

Tackling Scotland's literacy problem

On 14 April members of the Scottish Division of Educational Psychology (SDEP) told a meeting at the Scottish Parliament hosted by Rhona Brankin MSP that it is vital to address the issue of poor literacy skills in a comprehensive and systematic way to improve outcomes for children who face the biggest barriers to education. A range of existing projects in Scotland are already changing the learning experiences and achievement levels of those at most risk of failure in this crucial area of learning, many as part of a whole authority literacy strategy.

It has been shown that initiatives in North

Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire and Edinburgh that improve skill levels, confidence and enjoyment in reading and writing, and support those who are vulnerable to failure, are making a real difference to children. These initiatives have in common key factors such as early identification and

intervention, the provision of a direct response to local needs, and close collaboration between education staff and psychologists.

Jean Campbell, SDEP Chair, said: 'Failure to acquire basic literacy skills can blight a child's life, diminishing their long-term life chances and impacting upon their sense of well-being and achievement in school. Educational psychologists across Scotland have an important role to play in this.'

One of the messages that the SDEP took to the meeting at Holyrood was that there is substantial research evidence about the kind of teaching and learning approaches that are best for developing the literary skills required to equip

children to participate fully and richly as citizens.

'For those with difficulties in building basic reading skills, added Jean Campbell, 'early identification and intervention are vital. Tackling these problems early, and providing the right kind of support helps ensure that the barriers to future learning and development are removed and outcomes improved.'

The SDEP also highlighted the additional challenges faced by local authorities serving areas where substantial numbers of children come from disadvantaged communities. 'We need to respond to pupils' needs in a way that will make a measurable positive difference to them,' said Jean Campbell.

Award-winning Research Digest blog

The British Psychological Society's Research Digest blog has won 'Best blog – Psychology' in the inaugural Research Blogging Awards. Sponsored by Seed Magazine, these international awards recognise the work of bloggers who write about peer-reviewed science. Over 400 blogs were nominated by the public before an expert panel of judges drew up a list of finalists in each award category. The overall winners were chosen based on votes from within the science blogging community. The BPS Research Digest beat eight finalists in the psychology category, including *Newsweek's* NurtureShock blog, Brain Blogger and NeuroWhoa.

If you haven't visited the Research Digest blog for while, it's worth taking another look (www.researchdigest.org.uk/blog). The site received a makeover in April, providing a cleaner, fresher reading experience. The editor, Dr Christian Jarrett, also has a Twitter feed (www.facebook.com/researchdigest), which continues to grow in popularity, with over two thousand people now benefiting from links to the latest psychology radio shows, newspaper articles and public events.

If you'd signed up to the Digest on Twitter in April, you'd have heard about *New Scientist* magazine's cover feature on frontiers in brain science, Mark Haddon's new play about bipolar disorder, and 'Inside the Brain of a Five-year-old' on BBC Radio Four, plus much more, including alerts to the latest postings on the Research Digest blog. Another way to receive these updates is to join nearly 3000 others by signing up to the Research Digest's fan page on Facebook (www.facebook.com/researchdigest).

After marking five years since the launch of the Digest blog in February 2005, the editor continues to invite celebratory guest contributions from the authors of studies reported on the blog back in 2005. So far, Professor Graham Davies has reflected on his 2005 study into driver stereotypes and Dr Gavin Nobes has looked back on his work on children's naive mental models of the earth. Look out for more 'looking back' guest contributions in the coming months.

Another development on the Digest blog is the introduction of advertising opportunities in a prominent position

near the top of the left-hand column.

If you'd like the chance to reach up to 90,000 Digest blog readers each month, please contact our advertising manager Sarah Stainton on +44 (0)116 252 9552 or sarah.stainton@bps.org.uk. She'll also be able to tell you about sponsoring the Research Digest e-mail, which now goes out to over 25,000 readers every fortnight.

SOCIETY NOTICES

BPS Conferences events See p.410

Learning Centre courses, events and invitations to tender See pp.410–413

BPS Student Lectures 2010 See p.417

Consciousness & Experiential Psychology

Section Annual Conference 2010 See p.422

BPS/POST Postgraduate Award –

applications invited See p.424

Special Group in Coaching Psychology/1st

International Congress of Coaching

Psychology See p.425

Getting your voice heard

It's easy to 'put the world to rights' with a group of colleagues in the pub on a Friday night, but doesn't it sometimes feel like you're just a voice in the wilderness?

Did you know that the Society responds to around a hundred consultations every year, and every single one of those responses is put together by you, the members? Taking part in putting together consultation responses means that people who make decisions actually get to hear what you have to say – and

Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government. Topics addressed include anti-bullying policies, the default retirement age, palliative and end-of-life care, obesity prevention, violence against women, stroke rehabilitation, the registration cycle for practitioner psychologists, and much more.

If you'd like to get an idea of the kinds of points raised in responses, take a look

at PSU's regular column, 'Consultations on public policy' (opposite).

Yes, it can be daunting putting yourself forward as having something to say, and some people worry that they may not be expert enough to get involved. However, psychology has so much to say on a myriad of topics, and contributions from anyone holding at least graduate membership, with knowledge, experience and opinions relevant to the issues under

discussion are always warmly welcomed and valued. It's also worth bearing in mind that you wouldn't be working alone.

So how does it work? It's simple really. The PSU circulates details of consultations, and members then tell the PSU if they're interested in contributing to a response. Once a group of members has been found, a lead author is appointed, whose role it is to collate the group's contributions and circulate until overall agreement is reached. The PSU then sub-edits the response, passes it on to the relevant Society Chair/s for final editing and approval, then submits it to the consulting body.

With the workloads many people face these days, it's natural to be wary of 'signing up' for anything extra. However:

- | telling the PSU that you are interested in hearing about consultations in your area/s of interest would not commit you to contributing to any response;
- | registering your interest in a specific

consultation would not commit you to actually contributing to that consultation (if, for example, you were unexpectedly landed with something huge to do at work);

- | your contribution can be as large or small as you like or have time for, and it can be as simple as sending a quick e-mail to the lead author. Even a single sentence is valuable if it makes an important point!

Still need convincing as to why you should take this on as well as the day job? Well, the decisions policy makers arrive at can have far-reaching implications for us all. If you want to exert some influence and shape policies that affect you, this is one way to have your say. Martin Fisher, Consultations Lead for the Division of Forensic Psychology says 'Since leading on and coordinating responses to consultations for the Division I have realised the real influence that the contributions of psychologists can make. In particular, [responses] have been satisfying in their outcomes and potential influence on central policy.'

So if you'd like to be e-mailed details of consultations relevant to your interests and expertise just complete and return an Areas of Interest Form – available from www.bps.org.uk/consult or, on request, from psu@bps.org.uk.

Alternatively, if you'd rather, just look in on the PSU's website once a week or so to check for new consultations and then e-mail us (psu@bps.org.uk) by the relevant deadline if you are interested in contributing to a particular response.

*Suzanne Jefford & Frances Mielewczyk
Consultations & Policy Executives
Policy Support Unit*

every response carries the weight of the Society behind it.

Professor Jane Ireland, Former Chair of the Division of Forensic Psychology says: 'Being able to have some influence over policy and publicise the value of psychology as a science is one of the most valuable aspects of assisting with consultations.'

The Policy Support Unit (PSU) was set up in 2005 to support, guide and coordinate members who are putting responses together; but the science, the evidence, the thoughts and advice come exclusively from members themselves.

The consultations responded to by the Society cover a wide diversity of topics and have been submitted to more than 100 different consulting bodies, including the Department of Health, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ministry of Justice, Health Professions Council, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, Department of Health, Social

LEARNING CENTRE

To have your CPD event approved by the Society and for a catalogue of forthcoming opportunities, see www.bps.org.uk/learningcentre or call 0116 252 9512.

To advertise your event in The Psychologist, e-mail psyadvert@bps.org.uk or call +44 116 252 9552.

A diary of non-approved events can be found at www.bps.org.uk/diary.

Society vacancies

Journals Committee

Editor – Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice

See advert p.416

Closing date 11 June 2010

Parliamentary Office

Parliamentary Internships

See advert p.421

Closing date 31 August 2010

CRB check available through the Society

The Society is pleased to announce that it can obtain standard and enhanced disclosure Criminal Records

Bureau (CRB) checks for members at a competitive price.

The procedure is simple – all you have to do is contact the membership team to request a CRB check, and we then send you the forms to complete. You return them to us, and we check and send your application on your behalf.

If you are self-employed or training on a Society qualification this could be the simplest way for you to obtain a CRB check.

I For further details or to ask for the forms, please call the membership team on 0116 252 9911 or send an e-mail to membership@bps.org.uk



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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at noon on **Friday 25 June 2010** in the Society's London office at **30 Tabernacle Street, London.**

The Open Meeting will commence immediately after the AGM.

Please submit questions for the Open Meeting in writing addressed to the Honorary General Secretary by Monday 14 June 2010.

Professor Pam Maras
Honorary General Secretary

CONSULTATIONS ON PUBLIC POLICY

Six responses were submitted during March, which were put together by members of 13 of the Society's member networks, including five of the main divisions. It was gratifying to see such a wide spread of psychological knowledge and expertise feeding into public policy, so thanks to all those who took part. Full details, including consultation papers and full responses, are available at www.bps.org.uk/consult.

Mainstreaming the Commissioning of Local Services to Address Violence Against Women and Girls (Home Office)

Following the publication of the cross-government strategy *Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls* in November 2009, the Home Office produced draft commissioning guidance to support local commissioners and partnerships. The Society's response welcomed the drive, and recommended:

- I that services be effectively contextualised and made accessible to the victims they are aimed at helping;
- I that media campaigns reflect the diversity of the cultures in which violence occurs;
- I that direct messages in more formal environments such as schools may be less effective than intended, and that it would be useful to work within local community groups, play groups, young mothers' meetings, etc.;
- I that court procedures should reflect the vulnerability of victims, and that screens should be offered to victims as a matter of course, rather than on a request basis as they are at present;
- I that the range of victimisation behaviours and victim groups needs to be recognised, including forced sex in intimate partner relationships, same-sex relationships and male victims.

Appraisal Screening for Alzheimer's Disease (UK National Screening Committee)

While the Society's response agreed that screening for Alzheimer's Disease in the general population is not yet warranted, it pointed out that early screening for AD in people at risk of, or suspected of having, dementia is supported by the existing evidence. Such screening could result in the identification of individuals whose intellectual impairment is caused by treatable disorders as well as those with neurodegenerative diseases such as AD. Those identified could then benefit from a range of interventions (including psychological) that could optimise function and minimise secondary effects of their condition.

Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities & Schools on Information Passports, Personal Learning Plans & the Core Entitlement for All Pupils in Pupil Referral Units & Other Alternative Provision (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

The government is proposing to set national standards for an educational entitlement for children and young people excluded from school and being educated in Pupil Referral Units. Although the Society welcomed many aspects of the proposals, its response highlighted significant omissions, particularly in the light of the Disability Discrimination Act. It also pointed out that there had been no recognition of the need for (or cost of) additional training or administration, that there was a lack of reference to evidence and evaluation of relevant interventions, and that government should be cautious in increasing the pressures upon an already stretched and stressed aspect of education. Finally, the importance of engaging with the pupil and family in a supportive way was emphasised.

The Society's responses to consultations on public policy is coordinated by the Policy Support Unit. All members are eligible to contribute to responses: please contact psu@bps.org.uk or 0116 252 9926/9577.