



APPLIED PSYCHOLOGISTS

Organising Professional Committee



Supporting Applied Psychologists in the Workplace

Who Are We and What Do We Do?

Unite the union represents Applied Psychologists in the UK. Within the union's Health Sector exists the Applied Psychologists' Organising Professional Committee (OPC), which regularly liaises with the British Psychological Society, the professional body of UK-based Psychologists and its Applied Psychology Divisions in Health and Social Care. The OPC also liaises with the Association of Child Psychotherapists and since 2009 the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) as required.

As the British Psychological Society's Royal Charter debar the BPS from entering into negotiations on pay and terms and conditions of employment, its relationship with the AP OPC has become highly significant. This was particularly the case in the review of NHS pay known as "Agenda for Change". At times of NHS cuts, the AP OPC works together with the BPS divisions to advise and assist members. There have been a number of Joint (BPS & Unite) Guidance Documents over the recent years i.e. on Preceptorship, Supervision of Assistant Psychologists and on Appointment of Applied Psychologists by competencies rather than adjectival titles produced in recent years has been long awaited and very welcomed.

The Committee

The Applied Psychologists' OPC comprises of Applied Psychologists from various specialties e.g. Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology, Counselling Psychology, other applied Psychologists and also Child Psychotherapists. The Committee includes both regional workplace Representatives, who have been elected to represent specific geographical areas and Co-Opted Representatives, who represent Psychology specialties too small to be represented regionally. Committee members liaise with government depts, the British Psychological Society and other professional bodies to; promote the employment and working rights of members, disseminate information, advise regarding employment matters, represent the interests of the members and ensure equality of opportunities for all.

Our History

Unite the union through its previous identities (ASTMS, MSF, AMICUS) has been representing Psychologists for over 35 years. Since the 1990s the Psychologists and Child Psychotherapists Occupational Advisory Committee used to be called Family of Psychology OAC. In 2006/7 the OPC name changed to Applied Psychologists, in part to denote the inclusivity and equity of the psychology specialties we represent.

Our Achievements

The OAC/OPCs spearheaded major changes for the Psychologists in the NHS. Amongst those are:

- The 1990 uplift of pay that followed the development of a new grading system.
- Enabling Trainee Clinical Psychologists to be salaried rather than on bursaries. Amongst other benefits this extended their employment rights to include maternity leave and sick pay, which had previously been denied.
- Ensuring that equity is achieved for NHS staff under Agenda for Change terms and conditions, following the transfer from the Whitley pay system.

- Developing and negotiating the job profiles for Applied Psychologists under Agenda for Change which resulted in considerable pay increases in pay and a new career structure.
- Providing guidance about: career progression under Agenda for Change; the Knowledge & Skills Framework; career development for newly qualified Psychologist through Preceptorship.
- Advising on statutory regulation with the Health Care Professions Council
- Contributing to the National Institute of Mental Health in England and the New Ways of Working agendas on effective deployment of the Psychological workforce.
- Producing Jointly agreed Guidance with the BPS Divisions i.e. DCP & DCoP.

The AP OPC is currently involved in the review of training funding for Educational & Clinical Psychologists and we continue to seek equitable access to funded training for all applied psychologists who work in the NHS.

The AP OPC is represented at Unite's Health Sector Committee, which lead's Unite's policy on health. It participates in the campaigns of the union within the NHS, as well as Public services. Where possible it liaises with civil servants charged with developing or implementing government policy and it also has links to Parliament via Unite's sponsored MPs. Additionally, Unite provides evidence to the Pay Review Body (the independent body charged with determining annual pay increases for NHS staff) and the OPC contributes accordingly.

"I'm an Applied Psychologist: How Can the AP OPC Help Me?"

The AP OPC supports the rights and represents the interests of members through psychologists reps, where possible, who have been elected to represent their profession. When the members ask for advice and support the AP OPC and the reps, as Union Representatives *and* clinicians, are therefore well-placed to understand the psychological, social, professional and wider contexts of their situation.

The AP OPC aims to keep Union members who are Applied Psychologists updated about key issues that might affect their working practices and also offers advice about how members can exercise their employment rights. This is done through establishing effective communication links between Regional Representatives (who are members of the AP OPC) and Workplace Representatives and regular joint liaison committee meetings with the various Divisions and Committees of the British Psychological Society. The AP OPC aims to provide information and guidance on the Unite Web Pages via the union's web site, www.unitetheunion.org

Union members of the professions we represent requiring advice or representation should first contact their local Unite Workplace Representative. Their contact details can be obtained from their local HR department or their regional Unite office. Alternatively, the appropriate Regional Officer for the employer can be found at: www.unitetheunion.org

Workplace Representatives alert the AP OPC to any issues affecting psychologists directly or via the Regional structures of the union, to ensure that effective monitoring and action occurs whenever possible. The AP OPC liaises with various Divisions and Committees of the British Psychological Society and the HCPC as appropriate, to highlight any working practices and emerging issues that might be compromising the integrity and future of the Professions of Applied Psychology.

Join us.....

through your local Unite rep or by post (applications form will be send to you on request to any unite office or online...

www.unitetheunion.org/join-unite