Annual General Meeting
of the
Northern Ireland Branch

Agenda

Lanyon Building
Queens University Belfast
BT7 1NN

Wednesday 7 October 2015
5.00pm
Agenda

The Annual General Meeting of the Northern Ireland Branch will be held on **Wednesday 7 October 2015, 5pm** at **The Canada Room, Lanyon Building, Queens University Belfast BT7 1NN**

1. **Welcome and introduction**

2. Declaration of interest

3. Minutes of AGM held on 15 October 2014

4. Matters arising from previous minutes

5. Reports:
   5.1. Chair’s report
   5.2. Honorary Treasurer’s report

6. Reports for information
   6.1. Other committee members’ reports

7. **Election of Officers & Committee members**
   7.1. Chair
   7.2. Honorary Secretary/Honorary Treasurer
   7.3. Committee Member - Web Editor
   7.4. Committee Member - Press Officer
   7.5. Committee Member x2

8. Introduction of new Chair

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**Declaration of Interest**

All members who wish to undertake work for the Society are required to complete a **declaration of interest** form so that the Society can hold a register of members’ interests for all boards, committees, standing committees and working groups in order to comply with Charity Commission guidelines. This also applies to members that want to contribute to meetings such as AGMs.

Where members and representatives have identified a conflict of interest, they must declare it and withdraw from consideration of any related matters. This is to assure the public and members of the Society that our professional, legal and financial responsibilities are carried out in an impartial and transparent way. It also protects members and representatives who support Society activities, by demonstrating transparency and impartiality in the decision making process.

Details and the appropriate online forms can be found via OCRA:

- [http://ocra.bps.org.uk/ocra/statementofinterest/](http://ocra.bps.org.uk/ocra/statementofinterest/)
AGM Minutes (Draft)

Northern Ireland Branch

Date & time: 15 October 2014
Place of meeting: Dunadry Hotel, Antrim

Attendance:

Chris McCusker
Sheila Peelo
Karen Hagan
Geraldine O’Hare
Liz Sproule
Karen Trew
Jackie Bates-Gaston
Jeremy Harbison
Lee Ann Sharpe
Carol McGuinness
Joan Harbison

Alison Clarke
Ken Brown
Susan Lagdon
Gillian Luney
Anne Kerr (Minutes)
Barbara McConnell
Clare Byrne
Johanna Robinson
Ron Smyth
Maurice Crozier

1. Introduction
   1.1. The Chair, Carol McGuinness, chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to the AGM.

2. Declaration of interest
   2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 2013
   3.1. The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were proposed by Geraldine O’Hare and seconded by Liz Sproule.

4. Matters arising
   4.1. There were no matters arising.
5. Reports

5.1. Chair’s report

The Chair highlighted the following:

5.1.1. During this year there was renewed emphasis on public policy. MCE was appointed as providers of policy advice and Ciara was employed as Policy Advisor and succeeded by Arlene. BPS UK-wide is taking more public stance on some policy issues. NI BPS is currently finalising policy priorities and have spent the year consulting with Divisional Branches to get them right. Chair brought the meeting through a series of documents related to the policy process in NI.

5.1.2. World Mental Health Day events were very successful across Dublin with PSI and Derry and Belfast.

5.1.3. First Hub was launched in September at UU Trauma Conference. Development of second Hub in RoI where over 50% of our members are based has been stalled due to the need for an updated Memorandum of Understanding with PSI.

5.1.4. NI BPS has been active in putting a business case to CEA for a NI based A Level Psychology course. The Branch is working closely with A Level psychology teachers through events for schools including the ‘Inaugural A Level Conference’ taking place on 5 December. NI BPS also exhibited at Big Bang Belfast Science Fair for the first time in 2014.

5.1.5. Ending her report, the Chair thanked Ciara Fitzpatrick and Arlene O’Connor of MCE Public Relations for Assembly Liaison, Barbara McConnell for Treasurer, Anne Kerr and the committee for an excellent year’s activity.

The proposal to accept the Chair’s report: Liz Sproule, seconded by Karen Trew.

5.2. Honorary Treasurer’s report

5.2.1. Barbara McConnell spoke about the accounts for 2013, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. A subvention of £16,370 was granted based on business plan submitted. The Branch was working within its means, successfully putting on a large number of events.

The proposal to accept the Treasurer’s report: Chris McCusker, Seconded by Ken Brown.

6. Other reports for information

6.1. Reports from the local Divisions were included in the AGM packs. These will be placed on the branch website for wider viewing.

7. Election of Officers and Committee members

7.1. Assistant Secretary/Treasurer – Lisa Graham elected.

7.2. Chair Elect – no formal nominations received through interest has been noted in the position of Chair for 2016.
Annual Report

Reporting committee member/Co-opted committee member:
Carol McGuinness

Report focus:
Chair’s report

Report summary:

Summary review of past 12 months including any recent activities

In line with the new BPS Strategic Plan (which was in draft form only for 2014), the Branch shaped its plans and related activities to align with the overall Strategic Plan. For this report I have identified a number of key strategic priorities for the Branch and I will report against these priorities.

The first point to report is that the current membership of the Branch is 2075 (which includes members and subscribers). The membership has been relatively stable for some time, but represents a slight increase from last year. Approximately half of the Branch members reside in the Republic of Ireland. Annual BPS statistics showed that 32% of the Branch’s members are Chartered and are highly likely to belong to divisions, 52% are graduate members only, while 16% are student members. The Branch membership statistics are roughly in line the overall membership profile of the Society which are respectively, 36% Chartered members, 47% graduate members and 17% student members. The Branch also has a small number of subscriber members. Thus, the shape of the Northern Ireland Branch membership reflects the overall shape of the membership of the Society, indicating that this Branch, as a region, experiences the same demand as the Society as a whole, to service members’ interests, albeit on a much smaller scale. Six divisions are organised locally (Clinical, Counselling, Educational and Child, Occupational, Forensic and Health) and there are two local special interest groups (Sport and Exercise, and Academics, Researchers and Teachers). Members of the Branch and members of the local Divisions work closely together on key strategic priorities for the BPS in Northern Ireland, especially so in the area impacting on policy (see below). Longstanding efforts to create this partnership are now bearing fruit, as commented on in last year’s Annual Report.
Progress on Key Priorities

1. Broadening the audience base for the Annual Branch Conference

- After holding the Annual Conference for several years in Enniskillen, we have shifted the venue in the last two years in order to attract a wider audience, with some success. This year, the venue was in Armagh.
- The local divisions now contribute symposia to the annual conference on a regular basis, and also hold their AGMs at the Branch conference.
- Postgraduate participation in the conference is widely supported through the PG prizes for best oral presentation and best poster. This has been augmented in the past three years by hosting a postgraduate methods workshop. The workshop is attended by students from universities both from NI and from the Republic of Ireland. This methods event has now become a regular slot for the Annual Conference and is proving attractive to for both postgraduates and early year’s researchers.

For several years, the Annual Conference hosted a public lecture. For this year we broadened the scope of our public engagement at the conference and welcomed the public to several events. The first event examined how psychology is used to benefit ex-service and service personnel in Northern Ireland, with contributions from a clinical perspective by Dr Michael Patterson on traumatic memories and from Dr Cherie Armour who reported the findings of a research project on what it is like to be a veteran in Northern Ireland. The session was attended by over 100 people – from veterans’ associations, fire and police services. The session finished with a keynote address from the BPS President, Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes on the historical significance of Myers, Rivers and others – the contribution of psychology in World War I. The second public event was part of our new ‘Psychology in Society’ seminar series and built on the Branch consultation response to the sexual orientation strategy for Northern Ireland. Speakers included Dr Paul Dalton, President of the Psychological Society of Ireland, who spoke about the contribution of psychology in creating a more equal, inclusive and stable society, Dr Keith Kerrigan who spoke about stigma and psychological consequences of being a member of the LBG community, and Dr Michelle Kavanagh, who spoke about dilemmas for psychological practitioners (see Policy section for further details). The third public event included a presentation from Kelly Gallagher, MBE and winner of Britain’s first Gold Medal for skiing in the Winter Paralympics. Kelly was coached by a sports psychologist, Kelley Fay, and they both talked about their experiences to an engaged audience. Many young people with sporting interests attended this event. We also opened Dr Lucy Johnstone’s keynote ‘Beyond psychiatric diagnosis: Critiques and alternatives’ to the public – which prompted very moving responses from some of members of the audience.

2. Attracting new members and supporting current members

- At the beginning of the academic year, postgraduate and undergraduate members of the Branch Committee liaised with the Anne Kerr, the Branch Advisor, to visit the incoming first and second year cohorts on the three university campuses in Northern Ireland (Queen’s, Ulster at Coleraine, Ulster at Magee) to market the benefits of BPS student membership and recruit new members. This strategy has been successful in maintaining student membership at a constant level in the Branch for many years now. Divisions are also active in recruiting students who enrol on professional psychology courses who may not have been BPS members previously. Open University tutors who are members of the Branch also point out the benefits of student membership to this group of more mature students.
In co-operation with the Psychological Society of Ireland, the Branch organises an All-Ireland Careers’ Event for undergraduate students. This is financially supported by most of the Irish universities, north and south. The location for the event rotates around the university campuses. In February 2015, the event was held in Northern Ireland at Queen’s University, and was attended by some 200 undergraduate students. A team of practitioner and academic psychologists regularly contribute to this one day event, and their presentations on careers are available on the NI Branch website for future reference by students who may not have been able to attend.

CPD activities for practitioner psychologists are organised mostly by the local divisions and these are reported separately in their annual reports. However, a more general CPD update event on HCPC was held in conjunction with the Branch AGM in October 2014, led by Ms Geraldine O’Hare, forensic psychologist, and Dr Lynn Dunwoody, health psychologist, both of whom have experience as HCPC assessors. This event was repeated at the Annual Conference in May 2015.

The North West Hub of NI BPS, which was launched in September 2014, continues to strive. Their first event at the University of Ulster at Coleraine in September 2014 with a one-day conference on ‘Trauma’, which attracted over 100 participants from varied professional backgrounds. Local BPS members who presented at this conference subsequently presented a symposium on trauma to the BPS Annual Conference in Liverpool 2015, supported by the Branch. Their next event is on the theme of Domestic Violence and is scheduled for the end of August 2015.

For the first time, the Branch, in collaboration with the three NI universities, held a conference in December 2014 for A level students who presented the results of their research projects. Although the conference was small scale, the model proved to be successful and another conference is planned for next year. This is the first year that the Branch has actively engaged with A level teachers and students beyond inviting them to the Flavour of Psychology (see below).

Northern Ireland Schools who teach A level Psychology were also notified that they were eligible for free membership of the Society.

3. Working in collaboration with educational and other partners

We were disappointed that the representations that the Branch made to CCEA, the local exam Board in Northern, to launch an A level in psychology was not successful. We first approached CCEA in June 2013, and from initial feedback it looked as if they would go ahead with a local psychology syllabus. At the last minute, we were informed that, due to financial cutbacks in all education budgets in Northern Ireland this year, no new syllabuses would be developed. We intend to return to the issue at another time. In the meantime, we will continue to engage with A level students, A level teachers and schools that teach A level.

On behalf of the Branch, Dr Barbara McConnell attended the BPS Pre-tertiary Workshops, where short policy statements on importance of psychology education for this sector are being prepared.

The Branch has excellent relationships with the three universities in Northern Ireland and jointly host events on a regular basis to the benefits of both parties – for example, Careers’ Events, A level Conference, Hub events, World Mental Health Day events, were all hosted jointly with the universities.
• The Branch jointly host public lectures with the Psychological Society of Ireland, and this year two public lectures were hosted, one at the PSI Conference in Kilkenny (November, 2014) and the other at the NIBPS Branch Conference in Belfast (May 2015). The local NIBPS Division of Health Psychology and the PSI Division of Health Psychology jointly hosted their annual conference in Belfast this year. Also the Presidents, Trustees and senior officers of both societies met at the BPS Annual Conference in May 2015 and have agreed to progress a Memorandum of Understanding between the two societies, which will be formally signed in November 2015. Previous difficulties have been resolved and NIBPS and PSI are now moving forward again with a programme of joint activities.

4. Visibility and Public Engagement

• The Branch organises an annual programme of events to increase the visibility of psychology to a range of different public audiences. It also responds to one-off opportunities; for example, the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences held in Belfast for the first time in November 2014.

• The annual Flavour of Psychology event, held this in February 2015 (in conjunction with the All-Ireland Careers’ Event) continues to flourish and draws an audience of approximately 200 students, most of who are in secondary school and are deciding what subjects to study at university. A small number of A level teachers and careers’ teachers also attend this event.

• For the second year, the Branch put on an ‘interactive psychology event’ as part of the Young Innovators Big Bang Fair in Belfast in June 2015; this event is gaining an increasingly important profile in Northern Ireland to attract young people into STEM subjects.

• The Branch also supported a group early years psychology researchers from both the University of Ulster and Queen’s University to run an interactive psychology event at the ESRC Festival of Social Science in Belfast in November 2014.

• On World Mental Health Day in October 2014, the Branch organised three simultaneous events across Ireland on the topic, living with Schizophrenia, at different venues, at the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, at the UU Magee Campus in Derry, and Queen’s in Belfast. Press releases attracted media attention.

• The Branch continues to participate in the Science at Stormont event hosted by the Royal Society of Chemistry in Northern Ireland – this year the topic for the Science at Stormont event was science education (October, 2014).

• Branch members are also engaged with at least two NI Assembly All Party Groups – on STEM and on Mental Health.

5. Impact on Policy

The Branch Committee worked collaboratively with the chairs of the local divisions to identify local policy priorities that are aligned with the BPS national policy themes, as well as to respond to emergent local policy issues. We have been greatly helped by the appointment of our new Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Liaison, Arlene O’Connor. The goal is that we create briefing papers on key issues and be prepared to influence political party manifestos on those issues for the NI Assembly Elections in 2016.

• The most important item on the policy agenda this year was the Mental Capacity Bill, which is now in the committee stage in the Assembly. From the consultation on the Mental Capacity Bill, a briefing paper was prepared in readiness for the Bill making its way through the Assembly. The Briefing Paper was circulated to all members of the Ad Hoc Health and Justice Committee and our NI Assembly Officer is closely monitoring the progress of the Bill.
• From the Sexual Orientation Strategy Consultation, another briefing paper was prepared, and was publicly launched at the Psychology for Society Seminar Series at the Annual Conference in Armagh (see section 1 of this report). Alliance MLA, Trevor Lunn, who attended the seminar in Armagh, subsequently announced publicly that he had changed his voting position on possible same-sex marriage legislation from ‘abstaining’ to a positive vote when next it comes to the floor of the Assembly. He attributed his changed position to the influence of NI BPS seminar that he had attended.

• Building on the work of the BPS Behaviour Change group, a roundtable discussion, hosted by MLA Fergal McKinney, was held at Stormont in June 2015. The theme was the role of psychology interventions in public health. Professor Steven Sutton, Chair of the BPS Behaviour Change Group, spoke to the group, as well as Dr Gavin Breslin (on physical activity interventions with children) and Dr Noleen McCorry (on health psychology interventions for long term illnesses). Professor Steven Sutton also gave a public lecture on the same topic at Queen’s University, attended by over 70 people.

• Our NI Assembly Officer facilitated Stormont meetings between members of the BPS Leicester Policy Unit, the Branch Chair and MLAS from all political parties and some of their policy advisors. The purpose of these meetings was to raise the profile of the BPS and psychology for MLAs, to identify for them key themes of interest for the BPS and the Branch (e.g. Mental Capacity Bill, psychology and public health), and to listen to the emerging priorities for the political parties as the go into an election year in 2016.

6. Communication

• We have also been developing a more focused external and internal Communications Strategy that we plan to include a regular e-zine to all members about our activities and events.

• The Branch welcomes the development of the Branches’ Forum. The Chairs of the entire BPS branch network now communicate four/five time per year through both face-to-face meetings and teleconferencing. This communication enables the sharing of activities, problems but also solutions, and appears to have sharpened the focus for the purposes and core activities of branches.

• For the first time this year, the Branches Forum (with the Community Psychology Section) supported a symposium at the Annual Conference, called Communities of Hope, with presentations on a variety of topics, including a presentation from Dr Paul Gaffney on behalf of the Branch, on this work with vulnerable children and those who care for them.

• For the past year, the Chair of the Branches’ Forum was the Chair of the Northern Ireland Branch. She is also representing the Forum on the Member Network Review Group.

7. Plans and Actions

• Plans are well advanced for the NI BPS 60th Anniversary Conference which will be held between 3–6 March 2016, at the Ballymascanlan House Hotel in Dundalk. This hotel was the location for the Branch’s first residential conference. The Branch committee are building on some of the themes from the Origins of Psychology NI project, which will be launched at the anniversary conference. Calls for abstracts are already open at www.kc-jones.co.uk/nibps2016

• The Branch AGM will take place at 5pm on 7 October in the Canada Room at Queen’s University, followed by a Public Lecture on ‘The application of psychology to large organisations: Prisons as a case study’ by Mr Paul Murphy, former Head of the Psychology Irish Prison Service.

• Plans are well advanced to hold several events at different venues in Northern Ireland for World Mental Health Day on 10 October.
• The Branch will again participate in the Science at Stormont event on 12 October. The theme this year is ‘Energy and the Environment’.
• Stormont event on Dementia is planned for 20 November.
• Building on the success of last year’s inaugural conference, the BPS 2nd Annual A-level Conference will be held on Friday 4 December.

Thanks

After two terms, this is my last year as Chair of the Branch. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the Committee members with whom I have worked over the past six years. They give a great deal of their personal time to promoting the work of the Branch and of psychology more generally. It is due to their efforts that the work of the Branch has expanded and become more influential.

I would like to give a special mention to Dr Barbara McConnell, who is the Branch’s Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, to Miss Lisa Graham, our Assistant Secretary, who has taken particular responsibility for organising and promoting events for postgraduate students and early year’s researchers, and to Dr Paul Wilson who looks after the website and Twitter feeds for us. Thank you also to Arlene O’Connor who joined the team this year as Assembly Liaison Officer.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to express our specific thanks to Anne Kerr, our regional advisor and administrator, who works tirelessly on our behalf and provides the infrastructure, as well as many of the ideas, to advance the work of the Branch and the local divisions.

Date completed: 14 August 2015
## Treasurer's report

### Finance data:

**NIBPS branch account 2014 (Audited)**

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**NIBPS Conference Account 2014 (Audited)**

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*Date completed: 17 August 2015*