

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Members of the Society are invited to submit nominations for the following positions on the Society's main Boards to serve from April 2006

RESEARCH BOARD

One Ordinary Member (one-year term)

One Ordinary Member (two-year term)

PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

One Member (two-year term) (renewable)

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE BOARD

One Ordinary Member (one-year term)

One Ordinary Member (two-year term)

PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION BOARD

One Ordinary Member (one-year term)

One Ordinary Member (two-year term)

MEMBERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING BOARD

One Ordinary Member (one-year term)

NOMINATIONS

Nominations should reach Nichola Whitmore-Cooper at the Chief Executive's office (nicwhi@bps.org.uk) by Tuesday 31 January 2006. To ensure validity of nomination, you should use the standard nomination form, which gives details of the information and signatories required.

VOTING

For each vacancy, if more than the appropriate number of nominations are received, a postal ballot will be carried out immediately prior to the Annual General Meeting 2006. Voting papers will be sent out during February.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006

The AGM of the Society will be held on **Thursday 30 March 2006 during the Annual Conference** (4.10pm–5.10pm) in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Cardiff.

The Open Meeting will commence immediately after the AGM. (Please see special notes below.)

Professor Ann Colley, Honorary General Secretary

OPEN MEETING and COMMUNICATING WITH YOU – THE MEMBERS

Members are actively encouraged to attend the Open Meeting. This year it will be held on Thursday 30 March 2006 immediately following the AGM (see above).

The Open Meeting is one of the opportunities for members to ask questions, raise issues and stimulate topics for discussion with and for consideration by the Trustees.

Informal notes of last year's meeting are available from the Chief Executive's office.

In order for the meeting to be structured, all questions must be submitted in advance. The deadline for questions to be received is 3pm Wednesday 29 March 2006. Please send your questions to me by e-mail: aoc@leicester.ac.uk, or in writing, or by completing slips provided around the Annual Conference venue. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the meeting.

Professor Ann Colley, Honorary General Secretary



Graham Powell

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

Discussions about statutory regulation have continued with the Department of Health and their lawyers. In tandem with this, the government's review of non-medical regulation, the Foster Review, has neared completion, and I have been a member of the Reference Group for that review. Andrew Foster advised the government Ministers in December, and before he did this we wrote to him setting out our views. In updating you as to the current position, I can do no better than to quote from the letter to Foster. You will see that we are arguing very strongly that the best solution both for the public and for psychology would be a new regulatory body designed specifically for our needs, while also pressing for much-needed reform of the Health Professions Council (HPC):

'Dear Andrew... As you will be aware, the Society not only welcomes the government's moves towards statutory regulation but has been working towards this, with ministerial support and encouragement, for many years in the development of its own regulatory processes. Our key principle is that the public must be protected as effectively as possible and therefore all psychologists should be regulated who need to be for that purpose.

'There has been much discussion in the Reference Group about the government's desire not to proliferate regulatory bodies. I understand this. There is, however, a danger that the objective of harmonisation may be pursued to such an extent that there is an obliteration of important differences between the nature of services provided, the expertise of the providers and the training necessary to ensure fully competent provision. The Society believes this is happening.

'I therefore must take this opportunity to restate to you (and, I hope, your Advisory Group) the view that the Society has discussed in some detail with your officials, namely that the regulatory model exemplified in the HPC is inadequate for the regulation of psychologists and, subsequently, allied professions. We believe that it is vital for public protection that a separate body is created. Work with the human mind and with personal and interpersonal behaviours and feelings is every bit as important to individual and social well-being as work with the body.

'Our proposal is that a separate regulatory authority should be established, along the general lines of and with similar powers to the HPC. We believe that this is appropriate because psychology and allied professions work with an identifiable body of knowledge that is conceptually different from that of professions already regulated by HPC. We have discussed this at some length with your officials under the working title of a 'General Psychology Council'. Our rationale for this is that:

- (a) it will most easily allow for the regulation of all psychologists who should be regulated and will therefore provide the most comprehensive protection for the public;
 - (b) it can easily regulate a range of professions that share common core principles;
 - (c) it can be easily expanded in terms of both breadth and depth to regulate related professions, as well as those operating at different levels such as assistant psychologists.
- 'Such a body would soon acquire a sufficiently critical mass of registrants and therefore rapidly become financially viable. More important, it would immediately enjoy the support of the professions it regulated and would win public respect and credibility. It would be able to work quickly and constructively to develop the necessary regulatory processes and procedures. (We note, incidentally, that the government has just agreed continued funding for a separate, specialist register for forensic practitioners.)

'We should stress that we have met and discussed these proposals with colleagues in the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy: they fully support our proposal and our assertions about its viability. We would all be willing to contribute to more detailed work on how the proposal might be implemented.

'Having said that, we recognise that Ministers may choose to pursue a different route and to stay with current regulatory arrangements. If this is the case, the Society believes that a careful examination of the structure and processes of the HPC is an urgent necessity. We have identified – and set down in writing to both the Department of Health (DH) and the HPC – a significant number of concerns which would need to be considered before we would be reassured that the HPC gave the public enough protection in the area of psychology. Since its inception, HPC has elected to tread a path that focuses on maximum harmonisation. Mapping this across thirteen different professions has meant that a lowest common denominator approach to standards has been adopted. We understand that the DH is aware of the potential dangers of such an approach and that there is the possibility of a review of HPC's structure and ways of working. We would support such a review and would welcome the opportunity to contribute.'

You must appreciate that to suggest setting up a new regulatory body is swimming against the tide of government thinking, but we owe it to the public and our membership to insist that this option is not brushed aside. We await, then, the outcome of the Foster review and the ministerial response, for which we have no timetable as yet.

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