



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MANNYSTRIE O
**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

CONSULTATION ON A WORKFORCE LEARNING STRATEGY FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2009-2014

Before responding to this consultation please take note of the Freedom of Information requirements in Appendix 1 at the end of this questionnaire.

Responses should be sent to:

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Education and Training Unit
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Please reply by 9 March 2009

Please tick

I am responding as an individual

Or on behalf of an organisation

**Name (Print): Dr. Philip McGarry... Job title: Public Affairs and Policy
Officer.....**

**Organisation: ...The Royal College of
Psychiatrists.....**

**Address: Clifton House, 2 North Queen Street, Belfast BT15
1EQ.....**

**Email address:
nmcnairney@nirelanddiv.rcpsych.ac.uk..... Date: ...12/2/09**

Q1: Do any of the recommendations or proposals in this strategy have a potential adverse impact on equality of opportunity for any group of people?

Yes

No

Please indicate any evidence – quantitative or qualitative – that would suggest a potential adverse impact.

Q2: The creation of this strategy affords new opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. How can the HSC best realise such opportunities?

Q3: Do you agree with the vision and scope of the strategy as first described in Sections 1 and 2?

Q4: The strategy is based on a number of principles described at Section 3. Are these appropriate to the purpose and vision of the strategy?

Yes. The College agrees with the principals set out.

The College agrees strongly that investment, training and education development should be prioritised to realise improvement in patient and client care.

The College has concerns that, particularly at a time of economic recession, there will be very powerful pressures for the service to reduce its commitment to training in order to ensure that targets for patient care must be met. The College

expects that the Department of Health will live up to its principled commitment to investment in training, as it is clear that, despite financial exigencies, it can only be to the long term benefits of the users and the service as a whole.

Q5: Do you agree that appropriate key issues have been identified, and conclusions drawn for each of the main sections of the report, namely

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Core skills, standards and values | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Opening up learning opportunities | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Vocational education and development | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Professional education | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Leading and managing health and social care | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Infrastructure | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- **Core Skills** – The College strongly supports the standard that all staff should have a personal development plan.
- Given the increasing complexity of the service the College strongly supports the importance placed on induction.
- **Professional Education** – The College welcomes the fact that registration will include applied psychologists and other psychological therapists. The College believes that any professional practitioner providing a service to the public must have appropriate accreditation.
- **(Para 8.7 & 8.12)** The College looks favourably upon initiatives which explore new avenues into medical education.
- The College has for a long time been committed to inter-professional working and we welcome all opportunities for this to be developed further. **(Para 8.16)** The College supports “the appropriateness of both unit professional and multi-professional learning”. Over the last two years the College has been developing deeper links with other mental health professionals and we believe this is strongly to be of benefit to psychiatrists and the other professions.
- **(Para 9.9)** The College recognises the research being carried out by the Beeches Management Centre, the University of Ulster and the Western and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts in facilitating post-graduate education management.
- **Infrastructure.** The College strongly supports the exploration of the potential of e-learning. The College recognises the great value of the library services currently provided.

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Q6: Have appropriate recommendations been identified to progress action in each area?

Yes.

Q7: Are equality issues adequately addressed within the strategy?

Yes.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The College welcomes the commitment in the document to life long learning and we are encouraged by the proposal which has been put forward to facilitate this.

The working environment is becoming much more complex and the emphasis on inter-professional education inter-personal skills is welcome. This of course must not be at the expense of unit professional training and we note that this is recognised in the document.

In mental health there is very little of the resource spent on specific items of equipment and (apart from the cost of running our buildings, which is likely to reduce over the coming years) the large majority of our funding is spent on staff. This makes it all the more imperative that we value, support and promote the personal and professional development of our practitioners.

The most important item in the armoury of the mental health practitioner is a capacity to develop a strong therapeutic relationship, built upon the basis of sound knowledge. To maintain the highest standard of care it is important that the morale and skills of our staff are maintained.

Thank you for your comments. Please return this form by **9 March 2009** to:

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. **Before** you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation.

However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public please include an explanation in your response.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs' Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).