

Royal College of Psychiatrists

Private and Independent Practice Special Interest Group

*Report to council June 2005*

The Private and Independent Practice Special Interest Group continues thrive, and now has an established programme of biannual meetings. College members from across the country and various specialities attend, raising a range of grass root issues.

Current areas of work include:

There is widespread concern about appraisal systems outside of the NHS. Members attending meetings have been circulated with The College's proposed appraisal scheme for doctors in the private and independent sector. The scheme has been supported by the Executive and Finance Committee of the College, but is now awaiting the outcome of the Chief Medical Officer's review of Revalidation in the light of the Shipman inquiry.

Similarly members are discussing revalidation for those with a limited range of practice e.g. medico-legal work toward the end of their careers. There is support for focused and flexible programmes of Continuing Professional Development, so that doctors are not unreasonably pressed to keep up-to-date in areas in which they did not intend to practice.

In conjunction with colleagues in the Psychotherapy Faculty, we are investigating concerns about the increasing restriction on private insurance-funded psychotherapy. It is reported that some of the main insurance companies are very reluctant to fund psychotherapy at all, or will only agree to very short periods of treatment. There is a complex system of rules differing between insurers, and Dr Denman with the support of Dr Sugarman has identified the relevant companies (BUPA, PPP, etc.), who have been targeted with questionnaire on the issue.

A plea was expressed about developments in the College's examiner policy - essentially that only those with (NHS) training responsibilities can become examiners.

In response to a letter from Dr Lisa McClelland, the examiners have agreed to change the national policy so that having a trainee is no longer a pre-requisite. Members believe that this is a very serious matter, as independent practitioners have a great deal to offer as examiners.

A major national conference is being planned, it is hoped in conjunction with the Management special interest group of the college. Speakers on medical accountancy, the independent healthcare market, and medical management are being lined up for a very interesting event in October.

Philip Sugarman

Chair

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