

Publishing College Reports and Position Statements:

A framework to support success

Introduction

One of the College's principal aims is to influence and develop policy on areas that contribute to supporting better outcomes for people with mental illness. We do this through the publication of College Reports and Position Statements. These can be effective tools for:

- influencing positive change in policy and practice on a particular issue associated with psychiatry
- enhancing the positive reputation of the College as an organisation that stakeholders should be working with in all aspects associated with the profession
- providing professional advice to support RCPsych members in their work.

This framework aims to support authors and sets out what they can expect from the College throughout the process to ensure their work has the intended impact. It is intended to ensure there are robust quality assurance mechanisms in place for all reports and statements that go out in the College's name.

Governance

The Registrar has overall responsibility for College policy and is able to draw upon the advice and support of the Policy and Public Affairs Committee (PPAC) and the Committee's Editorial Board.

The role of the Editorial Board is to:

- consider proposals to develop new or updated College Reports and Position Statements
- advise whether there is better way to achieve the proposed objectives of the work and offer alternative approaches (where a College Report or Position Statement is not considered the best option)
- comment on and offer advice on drafts submitted for review, seeking views from and liaising with the PPAC
- identify areas which might benefit from work being commissioned to establish or update a College position.

College Report and Position Statements

When should a College Report or Position Statement be developed?

A College Report or Position Statement is used where the College wishes to express a policy position on a particular issue, and in doing so, set out:

- responsibilities and strategic ambitions of the College ('what we want to do')
- responsibilities and strategic ambitions of other organisations ('what actions the College believes others should take').

Choosing the type of publication

College Reports consider a specific issue in depth, normally with a detailed examination of the evidence base. They are typically substantive reviews of a subject area, and can be used for publishing guidance, evidence reviews and detailed policy documents.

Position Statements are typically outward-facing, concise statements of the College position on a particular subject area. They can take two forms.

1. A briefing document that sets out what the issue is, an overview of the evidence, and a College position with appropriate recommendations.
2. A short, high-level statement of the College view on a matter. This is typically on an area where the College wants to make its position known but does not necessarily want to take a leadership role.

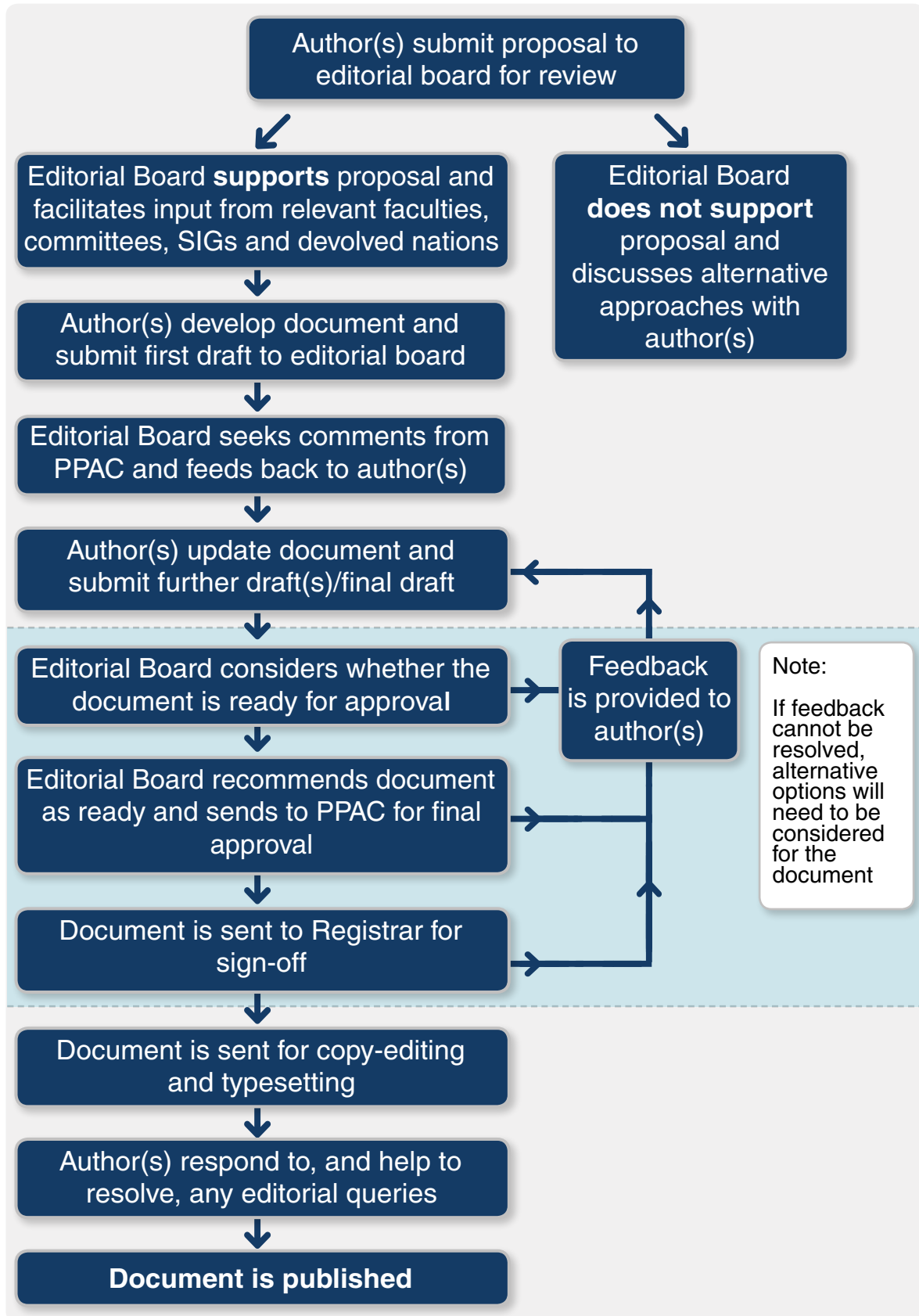
College Reports and Position Statements constitute official College policy until revised or withdrawn.

Making a proposal to develop a College Report or Position Statement

It is important that authors consider the purpose of a proposed College Report and Position Statement from the beginning. This will help in focussing its content so that it meets the objectives that the authors are seeking to achieve.

The PPAC Editorial Board have developed a proposal form for authors to complete and submit when they want to develop a College Report or Position Statement. The form is provided as a standalone document; however, the version at **Annex A** provides tips on what is required.

Process of publishing College documents



(This process should take around 6–12 months)

Developing a College Report/Position Statement

Potential timing of publication

It is important that authors liaise with the College Policy and Standards Manager at the outset and throughout the process about the potential timing of a publication. If the proposed timing of a publication is known at the outset or in the early stages of its development, that will allow for potential communications and media opportunities to be maximised.

On a more practical level, there are a large number of materials being considered at any one time by the PPAC/Editorial Board. It can be difficult to accommodate publication dates without good notice.

Structure of College Reports/Position Statements

The impact of excellent content is likely to be increased if the document is clear and well structured. The College is also keen to ensure that College Reports and Position Statements are presented in a consistent way where practical.

To help authors consider how they might achieve the maximum impact from their document, we have provided guidance at **Annex B** on how a document should be structured, while not being prescriptive.

PPAC and Editorial Board involvement in development and sign-off

The Editorial Board will be available throughout the document development process to support authors by providing advice and comments on the substance and presentation of drafts.

The PPAC has a role providing comments and sign-off as follows:

- The first draft of a College Report or Position Statement will go to the PPAC for views, which will be considered by the Editorial Board as part of providing feedback to authors.
- A final draft will be circulated for sign-off once the Editorial Board have recommended it for publication.

The final draft will then go to the College Registrar for final approval.

Timelines for developing College Reports and Position Statements

We recognise the amount of work that authors, on a voluntary basis, undertake in drafting College Reports and Position Statements. An important role for the Editorial Board is to support authors in developing documents in a timely way so that the work remains relevant and is published at a time that achieves maximum impact.

From the time of proposal, authors should seek to progress through the drafting, peer review (including Editorial Board) and sign-off process within approximately 6 months. They should spend no longer than 12 months unless there are exceptional reasons.

Editorial board meetings happen every 3 months. As a general guide, once a proposal has been agreed, we would expect a first draft to be sent for consideration to the next Editorial Board meeting (3 months after proposal agreed), and then an updated/final draft to be available for the subsequent Editorial Board meeting (6 months after proposal agreed).

It is important that authors follow this timescale as much as possible as it allows the Board to plan capacity for the publication process and identify any potential delays in advance.

The Editorial Board considers progress of documents at each meeting to ensure they are developing in a timely way and to provide support to the authors where necessary.

What happens after a College Report or Position Statement has been signed off for publication?

Once a College Report or Position Statement has been signed off, it will be edited, proofread and typeset for publication on the College website.

Documents are typically processed in the order that they are cleared for publication. However, the Editorial Board and Registrar can prioritise a publication under exceptional circumstances, or a document may be prioritised if a publication date has been agreed with the Editorial Board in advance.

While every effort is made to publish documents as quickly as possible, depending on the number of College Reports or Position Statements that have been cleared at any one time, as well as other competing priorities for the College publications editor, it can take up to 3 months for a signed-off document to be published. The earlier the Editorial Board is notified of a publication deadline the better, as this will allow us to advise on the feasibility of having the document ready. The Editorial Board will regularly communicate with authors about the progress of their document through the publication process.

Communications support will be considered for any approved proposal by the College's External Affairs and Digital teams. This will be delivered through a strategic communications plan.

Quick tips for submitting the full document

- Ensure your references are complete and provided in [Harvard style](#).
- Provide data used to create any charts or graphs separately so that we can redraw them for use in the finalised typeset document.
- Gain and submit any relevant permissions along with your draft College Report or Position Statement. Note that even if you are referencing your own work, you may not own the copyright to it – it's likely to belong to the publisher.

More information

If you need any further information in relation to this Framework, please contact the College Policy and Standards Manager (thomas.denning@rcpsych.ac.uk).

Proposal for a College Report or Position Statement

Brief description of proposal (max 100 words):

- Include the topic area you are seeking to address.
- Be clear as to what the key concerns or opportunities are within that topic area.
- Provide confirmation of whether you are proposing to develop a College Report or Position Statement

Source of request

(e.g. Faculty/Specialist Adviser/College Lead/Special Committee/Other):

Name of Faculty/Specialist Adviser/College Lead

Date of submission:

Date that you submit proposal to the Policy and Standards Manager

Contact details

Name(s):	Lead author should be named
Email address(es):	
Phone number(s) (optional):	

Please provide the following details about your proposal:

1. How does it fit with the objectives of the College's Strategic Plan?
 - To deliver education, training and research in psychiatry.
 - To promote recruitment and retention in psychiatry.
 - To be the voice of psychiatry.
 - To improve standards and quality through a range of measures including quality improvement, and evidence-based research, across psychiatry and wider mental health services.

2. Does the request relate to a previously agreed workplan or to implementing policy recommendations contained in outputs previously produced by the Policy and Campaigns Team/elsewhere in the College? Please give details.

Based on the above objectives, outline how this work links to and will meet one or more of these.

3. What are the objectives of the work?

- Detail the workplan (e.g. Faculty or Committee) that this relates to.
- If it relates to work already produced by the College and is supporting implementation, give brief details.

4. Explain why doing this work is important to the College. Please provide your response in one paragraph or less, quoting College documents as necessary.

Beyond the interest/relevance to your specialty, please briefly outline why doing this is important to the College more widely.

5. Why is this the right time to do this work, i.e. how does it respond to the mental health policy environment and/or seek to influence and shape a future policy focus in a timely way?

Give details of any relevant announcements/work programmes, initiatives, or media/public interest etc. that makes this the right time to do this work now.

6. Which other parts of the College will this be relevant to (Faculties, Committees, SIGs) and how will they be engaged with?

Please list other specialty areas who will:

- Need to have some input, whether they be Faculties, Committees, SIGs, or College leads.
- Outline any contact that you have already undertaken with these other areas and explain how you intend to involve them in developing this work.

7. Will this document take account of the issue across the UK or is it specific to one of the nations? If the former, what arrangements do you intend to have in place to ensure the output is UK-wide?

- Please state if the piece of work is intended to be UK-wide or country-specific.
- Outline any contact that you have already undertaken with the Devolved Nations and explain how you intend to involve them going forward.

8. Would the work require support from the College? If so, describe the support needed.

- The expectation is that authors undertake the research and drafting of a College Report or Position Statement, and that the College provides support once a first draft is submitted for review.
- If you believe you require additional support from within the College, please outline what that support is and why it is required.

9. How would you ensure it is evidence-based and credible? Please set out what arrangements you have in place for peer review.

- Please outline whether this is a topic area with a strong or weak evidence base.
- If weak, explain how this work will help address that.
- Please outline how you intend to have the work peer-reviewed.

10. How would its impact be evaluated?

Outline any early or detailed thoughts on how we will know if this output has achieved its intended objectives.

Position statement structure

Purpose of document

This should set out the reason for the document. For example, it could set out the College view on a particular issue and make recommendations on how to make progress on it.

Issue

This should give a summary of what the position statement is about, what the particular areas of concern are that need to be addressed, or points that require clarification.

Evidence

This should set out a summary of the evidence, including an assessment of its robustness, which the reader should then be able to understand the subsequent College position and recommendations.

The College position

This should clearly set out the College position on the issue. For example, the College believes that there is significant variation in practice in a given area and Government and other organisations have not adequately addressed this.

Recommendations for action

This should set out the actions that the College believe need to be undertaken to address the concerns identified or provide the clarification needed. It should include details of who should be responsible for delivering it and by when.