

Welcome



Issue 2 **December 2016**

The December issue of our APPTS newsletter is packed with news of all the exciting things we've been up to over the last six or so months. There have been lots of events, some changes in the team, and plenty of new teams accredited!

We've also got a great article from one of our member services about their experiences of being involved in the programme. So read on to find out more!

The APPTS Team

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Congratulations!

The following services have now been accredited by APPTS:

Alliance Primary Care Psychological Therapy Service

Emotional Wellbeing Service, East Riding

The Maya Centre

Sunderland Psychological Wellbeing Service

Psychological Therapies Service, Antrim

LIFT Psychology Swindon

Staff Support Service, Mersey Care

University of Sheffield Counselling Service

Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT),
Warwickshire

The Wellbeing Service, Hertfordshire

Rehabworks

Calderdale Talking Therapies

APPTS Team changes

This year we have unfortunately had to say goodbye to Rachel Heggart who left the team, and I'm sure many of you knew her well by correspondence. However, we have the pleasure of welcoming **Alice Ryley** to the team who took over the role as APPTS project worker during the summer. Please direct APPTS queries to her alice.ryley@rcpsych.ac.uk or to the general APPTS inbox appts@rcpsych.ac.uk

Welcoming new members

Since concluding a successful pilot phase of the programme, APPTS is now open for new service registrations throughout the year. 6 new services joined in 2016 and APPTS is going from strength to strength.

Opportunities to attend peer review visits

One of the great things about welcoming lots of new members is that we have a steady stream of opportunities to go on peer review visits.

Remember that you can attend as many peer review visits as you like once you've been trained. They can be a great opportunity for learning and sharing good practice, and are enjoyable, too.

If you're not trained, our training is free to attend and takes place two or three times a year. Our next training event is on **10 January 2017** in London and we still have places available if you're interested in attending. Contact the APPTS team to enquire.

Project Board: seeking psychiatrist

We are currently looking for a psychiatrist to join and contribute to the APPTS Project Board.

The APPTS Project Board has an important and exciting role in steering the national project and advises the project team on diverse matters including future directions, clarifying issues that arise, planning events and promoting the project. The Board meets 3 times per year in London.

Applicants should send a brief CV and covering letter explaining their interest and experience, and how they may contribute to the Board. More information is available in the 'vacancies' section at www.appts.org.uk.

Applications will close on **20 January 2017**. If you know of a suitable potential candidate, please do encourage them to apply.

What is an interim review?

Services that were accredited in summer 2015 are now half-way through their 3-year accreditation period. At this time, we ask services to complete an interim review which is designed to update the APPTS team on how the service is doing.

This includes asking whether anything major has changed since the review. For example:

- Major changes in staffing
- Major changes in policies, procedures or documentation
- Changes in commissioning or funding
- Serious untoward incidents or serious complaints (and their appropriate investigation)

This helps the APPTS team to understand whether anything has happened that might affect how services meet the APPTS standards. We are also interested to hear about any other quality improvement activity the service has undertaken since their review, either due to being involved in the APPTS process or more generally.

Finally, we ask teams to update the action plan they created to address their action points following peer review and accreditation. We like to see that teams have been working on these!

APPTS – the journey for Anxiety UK

As the UK's leading anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression charity, Anxiety UK is in a unique position offering a wide range of services to those living with these conditions.

However, it's important that our services have been subject to external validation to reassure our clients of the quality of provision we can offer.

Building on the charity's track record of securing external accreditations such as the Approved Provider Standard awarded by the Mentoring & Befriending Foundation in 2013 in respect of the charity's former peer mentoring service and the Helplines Partnership Standard secured in 2015 in respect of the charity's Infoline support services – national phone line, email, live chat and text messaging – the opportunity to benchmark our therapy services delivered by our 200+ strong team of volunteer Anxiety UK Approved Therapists through the APPTS scheme was next on the agenda.

Prior to formally starting the process we had already carried out a brief internal assessment of where we thought we were before the start of the self-review period; this proving to be a very helpful activity to undertake in readiness for the accreditation itself. Once we started the self-review process we adopted a red, amber, green (RAG) rating system against each APPTS standard which allowed us to concentrate on addressing those that were rated amber and red.

In some cases the action required was simply a case of formalising and documenting current practice that wasn't set out in our existing policy, procedures and guidelines handbook for Anxiety UK Approved Therapists. This provided some quick wins and allowed us to focus on areas that required more work.

At the same time the therapist and service user surveys were being conducted, also providing some interesting insights into

areas where we could focus further attention.

The final piece of the jigsaw required more detailed work; for example enlisting the support of external agencies to develop specific policies to support client groups with specific needs such as blind or partially sighted service users or the LGBT community.

While the self-review process was quite intense and required a level of time commitment it provided a high degree of confidence and reassurance that we were on the right track and ensured we had the appropriate policies in place.

Next up was the Peer Review!

[The peer reviewer training] gave us an excellent opportunity to know what to expect and helped reduce our own anxieties about the process.

Prior to the peer review visit myself and a colleague were invited to undertake the peer review training as part of our commitment to the APPTS programme to undertake reviews of other services in the future. This gave us an excellent opportunity to know what to expect and helped reduce our own anxieties about the process.

Naturally, as with any external examination of your systems and processes, you are always apprehensive. However, our concerns were soon alleviated.

While the Peer Review day is designed to ask questions, challenge you and examine the evidence you have provided it is also an opportunity to learn from other services, discuss ideas and share best practice. Far from being a terrifying experience it was a collaborative one with valuable learning outcomes.

As a result, in two specific areas where the team felt we could further improve and strengthen the way we met those standards, we have identified ways of further enhancing what we deliver which will ultimately improve the quality of the service.

While the Accreditation Committee has deferred us for three months in order to implement the changes we have planned to address those two standards, feedback and guidance from the APPTS staff team in helping us develop an action plan has been invaluable.

We are confident we are now on track to achieve the APPTS accreditation in the New Year and our clients will be the ultimate beneficiaries as a result. Our honest view of the accreditation process is that it is one that is hugely beneficial, relevant and important. Going through the accreditation process has most definitely helped us to further improve our service delivery offer.

Dave Smithson, Anxiety UK Therapy Services Coordinator

Second National Psychological Therapies Services Forum 2016

On 14 November 2016, the second APPTS national forum took place. At the start of the day the APPTS team gave a presentation on data collected from APPTS member services over the last year. This included data about how services are provided, and also highlighted some of the areas where services generally don't perform so well.

One of the areas services often struggle with is ensuring staff well-being, and the APPTS presentation was followed by two excellent talks on improving staff well-being. This work is currently supported by the British Psychological Society's Wellbeing Collaborative Learning Network.

We also heard from an APPTS member service about their experience of participating, increasing access for people from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, integration of mental and physical health, working with suicidal clients and developing meaningful service user involvement.

The day was a great success with good feedback from attendees and we look forward to seeing you next year!

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