

News Release

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New National Occupational Standards for psychological therapies

Practitioner and service user representatives have welcomed the launch today of new National Occupational Standards for psychotherapy and counselling.

The Standards provide guidance on good practice for those working in the sector and were developed by Skills for Health as part of a project funded by the Department of Health and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

They cover four types of therapy: Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Psychoanalytic/ Psychodynamic Therapy, Family and Systemic Therapy and Humanistic Therapy.

Although the Standards are not mandatory, they are recommended by leading professional bodies for psychotherapy and counselling as a valuable resource for practitioners, employers and commissioners, and training providers.

For practitioners, the Standards clarify minimum standards of competent practice and provide a challenging agenda for planning and reflecting on personal learning and development. They can also be used to help identify gaps in learning, and to indicate the outcomes of any training and development used to fill these gaps.

Employers are able to use the Standards to benchmark and improve employee performance and to support service delivery, while education providers can use the Standards to inform the development of UK-accredited qualifications.

Dr Lynne Gabriel, Chair of The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy said: "The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, representing 35,000 members, welcomes these standards to help the public find trained and trustworthy therapists. We are especially

pleased to note the inclusion of a full range of evidence-based practice styles because a variety of treatments is needed for our variety of clients.”

Jonathon Coe, Chief Executive of WITNESS, the professional boundaries charity said: “These standards will be helpful in assisting the public, and people who use psychological services, to understand the principles which inform some forms of therapeutic practice.”

John Rogers, Chief Executive of Skills for Health, said: “National Occupational Standards have already proven their value in many fields of healthcare and I am delighted at today’s publication of the Standards for psychological therapies. They present an extremely powerful resource for those who commission, manage and deliver such services and will help shape the psychological therapies workforce of the future.”

The Standards can be downloaded from
<http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competences/competences-in-development/psychological-therapies.aspx>

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Notes to editors

1. National Occupational Standards describe performance as outcomes of a person’s work. They focus on what the person needs to be able to do, as well as what they must know and understand to work effectively and are designed to enable individuals to be assessed against them.
2. NOS are informed by best practice. They are designed to express what research and clinical practice have shown to be effective in a practitioner’s work with an individual or group. They also set out knowledge and understanding that is necessary to meet these standards of practice consistently. They do not correspond to a job title; rather they show the various facets of a service provided by individuals or organisations.
3. NOS developed by Skills for Health are applicable across the whole healthcare sector where the relevant modality is provided. This includes the National Health Service, Independent, Voluntary and Private Practice across the UK.
4. NOS can be used for a number of purposes which include:
 - Clarifying a minimum standard of competent practice
 - Informing the curriculum for training programmes
 - Supporting reflection on practice
 - Supporting team development
 - Supporting service design and delivery

- Informing career pathways
 - Developing job descriptions
 - Benchmarking and improving an employees' performance
 - Informing UK-accredited qualifications
5. Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council for the UK healthcare sector, encompassing the National Health Services, independent healthcare providers and voluntary organisations. Its purpose is to help develop solutions that can deliver a skilled and flexible workforce to improve health and healthcare.