

PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Briefing Sheet – May 2009

This briefing sheet and the Frequently Asked Questions document that accompanies it, aims to address some of the misunderstandings associated with this project. It will also provide an update regarding the project so far.

Clarification

Recent communications received by the project team have related to the following questions:

- What are the 451 rules for Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic therapy?
- How does Skills for Health relate to the regulation of Psychological Therapists and Counsellors?
- How do the National Occupational Standards link to regulation?
- Why are Skills for Health excluding other therapies in the development of National Occupational Standards?
- What do you mean by cross modality?

The answers to these and other questions are provided in the Frequently Asked Questions update sheet that accompanies this briefing.

Project Overview

Skills for Health are working with practitioners, professional organisations and experts to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Psychological Therapists and Counsellors. The project has developed draft NOS for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic therapy and Family and Systemic Therapy. Further work is underway to develop NOS with humanistic practitioners. The final title of this group of NOS has yet to be agreed with the working group.

The groupings of the NOS reflect the areas and approaches of work practitioners may undertake. They have no direct correlation with roles or the titles of practitioners who may use the NOS.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) development process

Skills for Health is consulting with practitioners to ensure the NOS are based on the realities of front line practice. We have been gathering evidence of good practice and working with practitioners' professional bodies. The NOS development has drawn on practitioners' and other stakeholder's knowledge and experience as well as the analysis of existing literature, evidence and investigation of best practice.

National Occupational Standards in healthcare and elsewhere have to satisfy three key criteria:

1. The accuracy, completeness and clarity of the NOS statements (technical)
2. Their practicability as a day to day tool (implementation)
3. Their acceptability as a standard that ensures client safety without setting an impossibly high, spurious or offensive threshold for practitioners (acceptability)

All NOS must also meet the Quality Criteria set down by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

Consultation

It is essential for the robust development of the NOS that we undertake extensive and intensive consultation.

The consultation on the CBT and Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic NOS has now closed, however the consultation process for the remainder of the project is as follows:

Family and Systemic Therapy	open until 30 th June 2009
4 th Modality (Humanistic)	opens mid June to mid September
Cross Modality NOS	opens mid June to mid September

We prefer that organisations collate the response from their membership to the consultation. It is still possible, however, for individuals to contribute to the consultation through the Skills for Health website: www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/psychologicaltherapies

Due to the phased nature of this work if you are interested in participating in the consultation on the humanistic (4th modality) NOS and or the Cross Modality NOS please register your interest by emailing ptherapies@skillsforhealth.org.uk with the following subject line in your email: "Psychological Therapies NOS Consultation – register of interest". This will enable us to contact you as soon as these draft NOS are available for consultation.

For further information regarding this project please read the accompanying Frequently Asked Questions, visit the project webpage at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/psychologicaltherapies or alternatively email us at ptherapies@skillsforhealth.org.uk

Appendix – Frequently Asked Questions – May 2009.

Psychological Therapies National Occupational Standards Development Project

Frequently Asked Questions - May 2009

1. Who are Skills for Health?

Skills for Health is one of 25 sector skills councils which make up the Skills for Business Network. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) supports and monitors Sector Skills Councils who are licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in consultation with ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Commission is a key recommendation in Lord Leitch's 2006 review of Skills in the UK; its ambition is to benefit employers, individuals and government by advising how improved employment and skills systems can help the UK become a world-class leader in productivity, in employment and in having a fair and inclusive society.

2. How is Skills for Health involved in the project?

The Department of Health commissioned Skills for Health to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Psychological Therapies. Skills for Health set up the structures, methodology and processes of the project. 'Technical consultants' employed by Skills for Health work in collaboration with practitioners and experts to translate the expert material into NOS.

3. Who is paying for this work? How is Skills for Health funded?

For this project Skills for Health is funded by the United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)

4. Why are Skills for Health excluding other therapies in the development of NOS?

It is recognised by the project team that there are a wide range of evidence-based therapies delivered within the UK that it is not possible to address within the remit of this current project due to resource limitations. The development of NOS for the modalities included within the remit of the current project does not promote the commissioning or delivery of the four modalities included in the remit of this project.

5. How were the modalities selected for inclusion in the current project?

In a scoping study in 2006, the then Strategy Group for the project selected therapies to satisfy one or more of the following criteria. They should be:

- supported by evidence of their effectiveness
- supported in public policy and/or consumer choice
- widely used in the UK
- the subject of objective training standards

The therapies selected by this process for a consultation in winter 2006-7 were expressed as:

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- Systemic Family Therapy
- Humanistic Psychotherapy and counselling

The findings of the initial consultation, subsequent discussion with professional bodies and within the Expert Reference groups for the four modalities have resulted in the following working definitions being adopted:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Therapy
- Family and Systemic Therapy
- Humanistic/Person-Centred/Process Experiential Therapy (currently referred to as the 4th Modality).

The title of the humanistic group remains under discussion. It is hoped the title of this group will be finalised through the Modality Working Group which is due to complete by the end of May.

6. What are National Occupational Standards?

National Occupational Standards (NOS) 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.

National Occupational Standards 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.

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. The consultation on the standards has sought feedback from test sites in various settings as well as organisational, professional and individual practitioner feedback across these healthcare arenas. In addition the project team is also seeking the views of service users.

What National Occupational Standards are not

rules, mandatory, professional, academic or operating standards and neither are they curriculum for programmes of learning.

7. How are National Occupational Standards useful?

NOS are intended as an optional resource and a useful tool that will be helpful to individuals, teams, organisations and education. They can be used for a number of purposes which include:

- Clarifying a minimum standard of competent practice
- Informing the curriculum for training programmes
- Support reflection upon practice

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- Support team development
- Support service design and delivery
- Inform career pathways
- Develop job descriptions
- Benchmark and improve performance of employees
- Inform UK accredited qualifications

Sector Skills Councils together with sector employers and partners develop, maintain and update National Occupational Standards as the needs of industry change, work patterns shift and as practices, legislation and technologies change.

8. What are the 451 rules that have been developed for Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Therapy?

These do not exist. There are currently twelve draft NOS for Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Therapy that have been developed, consulted upon and tested in practice. Because NOS are an optional resource, *not* rules, individuals can choose to use as many, or as few, as they wish that are applicable to their job role. Each NOS contains performance criteria along with underpinning knowledge and understanding statements that define what is needed to achieve the standard.

9. How many NOS has this project developed?

To date the Psychological Therapies NOS development project has developed a number of draft NOS for the following modalities:

- Eleven draft CBT NOS - Consultation closed.
- Twelve draft Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Therapy NOS – Consultation closed.
- Fourteen draft Family and Systemic Therapy NOS – the consultation closes on the 30th June 2009.

A further set of draft NOS are being developed for the 4th modality with the intention that these will be available for consultation and testing from mid June 2009 through to mid September 2009.

The final number of NOS available upon the completion of this project will be dependent upon the work of a Cross Modality Working Group that will be looking at all four sets of NOS to identify whether there are any commonalities and potential areas of duplication. The output of this group will result in suggested revisions that will be consulted upon from June 09 through to September 09.

10. What is the Cross Modality Working Group?

A Cross Modality Working group is being set up to review the draft standards developed across the whole project and identify whether there is any duplication or commonality across the standards. This group will have representation from each of the four modality working groups that have participated in this project so far and will be familiar with the methodology of the development of the standards. Any standards that are identified as being applicable to more than one modality included within the current project will also be subject to consultation.

11. How do National Occupational Standards relate to the regulation of Psychotherapists and Counsellors?

Regulation of Psychotherapists and Counsellors is a separate piece of work being undertaken by the Health Professions Council (HPC). The National Occupational

Standards can be used to inform the HPC Standards that will be used for regulatory purposes but NOS are not the standards for regulation.

12. When does this project finish?

This project finishes on the 31st October 2009.