



# A Year of Change & Development

**WELCOME  
to the latest  
NWCPP Newsletter.**

Over the last year there has been considerable change and development on the programme and we have focused primarily on these changes in this edition. We welcome two new members (Donna and Anna) to the team as well as introducing the new First-Year cohort.

Christine Blincoe writes about some developments with the assessment of CBT competencies and Michaela Swales talks about an exciting new DBT elective placement.

On the curriculum side, Elizabeth Burnside outlines some changes to the curriculum and Carolien Lamers discusses some changes to our selection procedures. There is an article about how we plan to increase our supervisor training and Chris Saville talks about some innovations to the research aspects of the training. Finally, we look back on our 30th anniversary conference celebrations held in April.

Overall, it's been an eventful and exciting year, and we are especially grateful to our supervisors and teachers for bearing with us as these changes slowly bed into place.



# Welcome to our First-YEAR cohort

The current first-year cohort of 10 trainees are nearing the end of their first placement. Here they briefly introduce themselves and tell us what they were doing before they joined the Programme.



**ALICE LITTLE**

Currently on placement with Kristina Cole, Alice's previous job was working as an Assistant Psychologist in a neuro-behavioural rehabilitation service for people with acquired brain injuries.



**GRAEME RAMAGE**

Currently on placement with Simon Mosley, Graeme's previous job was working in a CAMHS team on Orkney.



**CARLA BENTON**

Currently on placement with Karen Kemish, Carla's previous job was working as an Assistant Psychologist in a community mental health team.



**BRITTANY DAVENPORT**

Currently on placement with Fiona Sanders and Nicola Robinson, Brittany's previous job was as an Assistant Psychologist in a neuropsychology service in Stroke-on-Trent.



**REBECCA BIGGLESTONE**

Currently on placement with Louise Brookwell, Becky's previous job was working as an Assistant Psychologist in secure and complex services in Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust.



**WILL TOOMEY**

Currently on placement with Renee Rickard and Keith Matthews, Will's previous job was as an Assistant Psychologist in Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Oxfordshire.



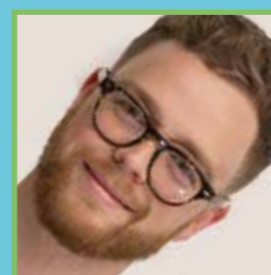
**EMMA ALOFS-WILLIAMS**

Currently on placement with Cara Rogowski, Emma's previous job was working as an Assistant Psychologist in Special Children's Service in North Wales.



**CLAIRE HANDLEY**

Currently on placement with Carolien Lamers, Claire's previous job was as a teaching assistant for children with intellectual disabilities and autism in Bristol.



**CHRIS PATTERSON**

Currently on placement with Joanne Kelly-Rhind, Chris's previous job was working as an Assistant Psychologist in a hospital for people with intellectual disability and offending histories.



**DAVID MCNALLY**

Currently on placement with Andrew Muse and Emma Evans, David's previous job was as a Psychology Wellbeing Practitioner in Shropshire.

# CHANGES to Selection Procedures



The selection process in Bangor has become justifiably well-known as one of the least stressful application processes that trainees experience. Typically, a trainee who applies to Bangor goes through a rigorous shortlisting procedure where NHS Clinical Psychology colleagues sit with us and review each person's application form, selecting the very best for interview. Usually we interview about three times the number of places we have available. Even if an applicant is unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage, we do our best to look after them and we are one of the few clinical programmes who will give verbal feedback on unsuccessful applications at the shortlisting stage.

Once somebody is selected for interview, candidates are invited to an evening meal on the night before their interview where they can hear more about the programme and meet existing trainees. The interview panel does not attend this meal and this facilitates the trainees to take care of the candidates and answer specific questions about the Programme. On the day of the interview itself, the candidates are allocated a specific host who will guide them to the specific locations for the interviews and written tests, and generally mind them during their time with us. Perhaps the most frequent feedback we receive is about the time and effort that goes into our attempts at making candidates feel at ease.

This year there are two significant changes to our existing procedures. Firstly, we have responded to feedback about the perceived unfairness of our previous requirement of a good 2i degree at undergraduate level and we now accept application from candidates with any 2i classification.

Secondly, we made a change this year in the way our members from the People Panel, as service user and carer representatives, are involved. For some ten years now, one member from the People Panel has sat on the interview panel and one other member has rated the written task. For the current interviews, we have added a second interview panel with two more People Panel members and additional NHS clinical psychology colleagues. By doing this the selection committee feels that in selecting future clinical psychologists we increase the voice of the people choosing our future clinical psychologists who eventually will be working with them.

Throughout these changes we are determined to keep our focus on minimising the stress involved for the candidates who come for interview. We firmly believe that the more relaxed a person can be at interview, the more we get a true insight into their character, attitudes and values.

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# SUPERVISOR TRAINING at NWCPP



The last year has seen a steady increase in the amount of training that the Programme has put on for both our clinical and research supervisors. It is likely that this trend will increase over the next few years and hopefully will remain as a characteristic of the Programme.

We recognise the considerable effort that supervisors put into supervising for us and, in particular, have been aware of the increased burden that has followed from the changes that have been put in place as a result of the revised BPS accreditation criteria.

The main BPS requirements are that we increase the amount of in-vivo assessment of trainees' performance and that we benchmark the development of therapeutic and professional competencies against recognised competence frameworks. Beginning with the 2016 intake, the previous logbook has been replaced with a more detailed clinical practice portfolio. There is also a requirement for a minimum number of observations of the trainee while on placement. In addition, some therapy skills will be assessed on a formative basis outside the placement setting by members of the Programme team together with members of the People Panel (see separate article).

Other assessment changes over the last year have involved the implementation of a new marking scheme, the dropping of the conceptual review assignment, and the introduction of a CBT RCA to replace one of the existing RCAs. On the research side, we have replaced the MAP with the DAP and are exploring how to support clinicians and researchers to collaborate on longer-term strategically-guided pieces of research.



Ken Laidlaw presented on the use of CBT with older adults

This level of innovation has led to an increased desire for us to present more workshop-type training. In addition to increasing numbers of assessor's workshops and supervisor training events we have also tried to increase the number of therapy training events that we can deliver. Last November the Programme hosted a workshop with Ken Laidlaw on the use of CBT with older adults and there are plans to build upon the very successful ACT workshop run last Spring with a series of regular follow-up meetings.

We wish to extend a warm welcome to anyone who inputs to trainee supervision in any way to come along to these events and to see them as an important part of CPD development.



Lee Hogan, Elizabeth Burnside, Kristina Cole and Jonathan Williams presented the Spring ACT Workshop



Michaela Swales reports on a recent innovative project where trainees from the Programme can take part in a Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) elective placement working in Bangor University Student Counselling Services.

Sarah Plum, Michaela Swales and Laura Spencer

# Working with Student Counselling Services

The idea behind the development of such a scheme came from three separate influences.

Firstly, the increased morbidity in mental health issues that are seen in CAMHS services more generally carries over into young adulthood and means that University Counselling Services are receiving increasing numbers of referrals for students with significant mental health issues. The students involved sometimes have difficulty accessing local Adult Mental Health services due to the length of existing waiting lists and the constraints of University terms.

Secondly, research evidence from the USA has supported the efficacy of DBT being delivered in University counselling services. In addition, recent research by Michaela and her team has found that DBT delivered in a group of similar aged peers (18-25) fared better than a matched control group.

Finally, there has been a desire to increase opportunities for trainees on the programme to deliver DBT and also potentially to research the components of DBT. Such component analysis research can be difficult to complete in clinical services because of treatment length and symptom severity.

During 2016 Michaela began discussions with the head of BU Counselling Services (BUCS) about the practicalities and challenges of running a joint venture to deliver an appropriate clinical intervention for their client group.

They decided that it would be wonderful to offer a comprehensive DBT programme in the counselling service but that this might be too ambitious as a first step. However, student counselling services already offered short psychoeducational workshops to students, covering such topics as anxiety management

and study skills, and so the skills-training class component of DBT seemed to fit well within the suite of interventions currently on offer.

Kate Tindle, Head of BUCS, submitted a bid to the Bangor Alumni Foundation to support one member of the BUCS staff to join with Michaela to deliver an 8-week DBT emotional regulation skills class in the Spring semester 2017.

This bid was successfully funded and provides an opportunity for 2 NWCPP trainees to join Michaela and Sarah Plum, an accredited CBT therapist working in the counselling service, to participate in the DBT elective.

During January, Michaela and Sarah assessed students from the counselling service who presented with emotional-regulation difficulties and impulsive behaviours and offered them the opportunity to participate in the weekly 2.5 hour skills class.

The class has got off to an exciting start with strong engagement from all participants. Michaela and Sarah, alongside Laura Spencer and Jess Crumpton, the two third year trainees pursuing the elective, will carefully evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention in relation to the development of emotion-regulation skills and decreased risk. If the outcomes from this trial are good, then the team hope to offer a more comprehensive DBT service in the future.



# NEW MEMBERS on the **team**

We have made two new appointments over the last year. After nearly a quarter of a century working on the Programme, Sharon Prenton Jones retired last September and Ffion Evans left her admin post around the same time to train as a nurse. Sharon was replaced by Donna Pierce and Ffion by Anna Roberts. We asked them to tell us a bit about themselves by way of introduction.

## Anna Roberts



I joined NWCPP in September 2016 and work on Thursday and Friday as a job-share post with Debbie, administering the clinical and curriculum side of the programme. I worked in administration at the University on a distance learning MBA programme for eleven years, before leaving fifteen years ago to start a family.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my years at home raising my three boys, who are now 15, 12 and 9. As the children got a little older, I studied towards achieving a childcare qualification, which in recent years has enabled me to enjoy working with children in a local primary school.

As a family we thoroughly enjoy making the most of living in such a beautiful area, including walking, cycling and kayaking. I enjoy skiing (although I'm not very good at it!) and am a keen animal lover. We have an excitable border collie cross dog, 'Harry', who I enjoy taking for walks and have four pet chickens who keep us in eggs! I am an Assistant Cub Scout Leader at my local scout group and am in the midst of completing a 'Foot Health Professional' course.

It has been a real pleasure to join the NWCPP team and I thank everyone for the very warm welcome that I have received from both the staff and the trainees.

## Donna Pierce



Donna joined the NWCPP team in November 2016 as Programme Manager following the retirement of Sharon Prenton Jones. She grew up on Anglesey and has worked in the area of education administration for over 20 years. After graduating from the then UCNW Bangor, Donna worked at the local further education college, 'Coleg Menai' for three years in the Management, Professional and Adult Unit before securing a post at Bangor University's Academic Registry in 1998. She spent 9 years working in the area of postgraduate admissions, records and awards before being appointed Assistant Registrar (Postgraduate Admissions) in 2009 and then Assistant Registrar (Student Records) in 2011. Having worked in a central services department for so many years Donna was excited when the opportunity arose to work in an academic department where she would gain a more in-depth knowledge of how education administration operates from the other side and so far, it has been a real eye opener!

When she isn't at work, Donna has two young sons who keep her busy and she enjoys reading crime thrillers, gardening, attempting to keep fit, and taking the boys and the family dog on long beach walks.

Donna is very happy in her new role and would like to thank everyone associated with the programme for the warm welcome they have given her.

# The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference

Dr Paul Whitby who gave the keynote address



The Academic year 1985-1986 marked the first time North Wales emerged as an independent region training clinical psychologists for the NHS. Last April, we closed a year of celebration with an anniversary conference held at the Quay Hotel in Deganwy.

Supervisors, stakeholders and trainees were invited, and it was particularly pleasing to see so many graduates make the effort to make contact and re-establish ties with the programme.

The conference opened with an address from our lead commissioner, Stephen Griffiths, Director of Workforce, Education and Development Services at NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership. Stephen was very complementary about the Programme and about clinical psychology more generally.

After Stephen's talk, the presentations were organised around three inter-related themes: Clinical Research, Leadership, and Psychological Therapies with parallel sessions held throughout the day.

In the first session delegates chose between a session led by Michaela Swales on the trials and tribulations of moving evidence-based treatments from clinical trials to routine practice, and a session by Louise Cunliffe on developing clinical psychologist as leaders. After the break Helen Sharp presented an account of research on gene-environment interplay in the development of child mental health problems, while Mike Jackson presented the results of the Unique study on the social context of the psychosis continuum.

After lunch, delegates chose between a session led by Lee Hogan on developing recovery-based psychosocial intervention for people with substance abuse histories and a session led by Bob Woods on living well with dementia.

The final session of the day was a keynote presentation by Paul Whitby who spoke about bringing our knowledge of psychological theory into the clinical arena.

The whole day was very well received with significant numbers of people taking the time to write afterwards saying how much they had enjoyed the conference.

Our 50th anniversary conference will be held in April 2035. Save the date!

# Modernising the Teaching Curriculum

Over the last year, there have been a number of changes and developments in the way the curriculum has been organised and delivered with some further changes in the pipeline. Here, Elizabeth Burnside, Academic Director, outlines her ideas for the future of the curriculum.



Over a number of years we have tried to respond to consistent feedback about increasing the skills development aspects of teaching, and we have also been aware that there has been some repetition of content across sessions where the same topic is taught in different specialisms. We were also aware of the need to tighten up the learning outcomes for some of our modules.

The most obvious change is the development of six distinct modules reflecting core competencies.

**These will cover:**

- Psychological Theory**
- Assessment and Formulation**
- Therapies and Interventions**
- Professional Issues and Personal Development**
- Leadership**
- Research**

The intention is that themed teaching strands will be planned, co-ordinated and delivered by a group of teachers. In this way, it is hoped to minimise overlap and help trainees integrate theory and practice across different specialisms.

First year trainees will continue with the 8-week Mindfulness teaching sessions, and ACT, DBT, Schema Focused Therapy and enhanced CBT will be introduced incrementally.

Early responses to the changes have been encouraging. For example, last October, a four-day attachment-based teaching workshop was presented by teachers representing a range of traditional specialisms. This workshop received excellent feedback from trainees and teachers alike and there are plans to replicate a similar model with other topics in the future.

We are very aware of the increased burden on our teachers as we ask them to become part of the changes we have introduced. Given the rapidly increasing demands from a number of other areas in the NHS, we have been particularly pleased with the enthusiastic and energetic responses from those we have asked to modify their existing teaching sessions.

# Research Innovations



The Programme recently held its annual Research Fair, where clinical psychologists from ten different clinical services, as well as several members of the Programme team, presented potential research projects for our first year trainees. The event took place in Pontio, the University's new arts and innovation centre and was well attended by trainees, university academic staff, local clinicians, and service users.

As the Programme's research team, Mike Jackson and I are keen to support clinicians and researchers to collaborate on longer-term strategically-guided pieces of research, while continuing to provide individual trainees and clinicians the freedom to identify specific projects which they are passionate about. To this end, we continued with the traditional approach of inviting clinical services to send a representative, but also encouraged clinicians who had plans for strategic programmes of research to have their own slot to present their ideas. Dr Emily Astley from CAMHS presented a proposed research programme on a new pathway for self-harm that is currently being rolled out and Dr Michaela Swales from the Programme presented projects on implementing Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in the university counselling service.

proposed research projects built on the foundations of previous trainee projects.

We have also begun to visit team meetings at a number of clinical services in the run up to the Research Fair in order to help them develop their ideas. We are hoping to continue this process over the following year and encourage clinicians to get in touch if they would be interested in meeting us. We received great feedback on the day with trainees remarking on how struck they were by the variety and quality of research going on between the health board and the university. Pontio was also a great venue that we hope to continue using in the future. Mike and I would like to thank all those who attended the day for their contributions and also to thank Fiona from the Programme team for her work in organising the event.

A number of themes emerged across the day as areas of common interest and we hope to find ways to take these forward in a collaborative way. These include: clinical use of big data; staff wellbeing; and social connectedness and belonging. Additionally, following an unprecedented number of trainee publications last year, we were pleased to see that many



Christine Blincoe reports on the CBT skills workshop

# CBT SKILLS Assessment

On a Tuesday morning in September 2016 a group of first year trainees arrived with some trepidation for the first of their CBT skills workshops. These workshops were set up in response to new BPS accreditation criteria which place a strong focus on the development of therapy skills in CBT plus another therapeutic model.

Academic Tutor Christine Blincoe remembers her own training in clinical psychology when supervisors rarely observed her work. She remembers being left with doubts about whether she was competent to undertake therapy and a fear that she would one day be "found out." It was only when she undertook further CBT training that she had the opportunity to observe other therapists in action and to get feedback on her own clinical skills. There is now a much stronger focus on enabling trainees to watch their supervisors in action and also on observing trainees carrying out their clinical work and providing developmental feedback. It is anticipated that this new approach will lead to more

confident and competent trainees for the future.

The CBT skills workshops were set up to enable trainees to practise specific CBT skills. We were very fortunate to have three members of our People Panel involved in running these workshops. Trainees initially watched members of the course team demonstrating different CBT skills in role-plays. They then broke into three small groups facilitated by a member of the course team and a representative from the People Panel. Trainees were given clinical vignettes about fictitious service users and asked to carry out a role-play incorporating the CBT skills that they had just observed. Some trainees worked with Danuta from Poland who had become anxious about her health following the death of her mother. Others worked with Mark, a sixty five year old man who had become low in mood as a reaction to chronic physical health problems. Video recordings were made of these role-plays for the trainees to work on with their clinical supervisors after the workshop.

We used a model of feedback in these workshops developed for use

in training General Practitioners. The model emphasises encouraging trainees to notice their strengths as well as areas for improvement. As always, the trainees were their own harshest critics and some needed a lot of encouragement to recognise what they had done well. In addition to reflecting on their own performance trainees were given feedback from other members of the group and the facilitators. The People Panel representatives gave written as well as verbal feedback. They were able to offer the trainees valuable insights about building and maintaining therapeutic relationships while also developing technical expertise in CBT.

Feedback about this workshop was very positive from all concerned. The trainees valued the feedback from different perspectives and particularly from the members of the People Panel. Based on this positive experience two CBT skills workshops have been planned for the current first year trainees. We are also encouraging all presenters to try to incorporate more opportunities for skills demonstration and practice in their teaching sessions.