

Report of Quinquennial visit to TCPP @ WMIP Birmingham 7th June 2008

**Visiting Team:- Christine Driver (WPF) (Convenor) and Stephen Gee (Site)
Alan McConnon (UKCP) was unable to attend**

The documents for this visit were originally received by UKCP and distributed electronically in November 2007. CD, SG and TCPP made several attempts to set a date for the visit but because of difficulties in finding a mutually convenient time and then a clash with the UKCP AGM the final date that was agreed was 7th June 2008.

Alan McConnon from UKCP was unable to attend. The visit was carried out by Christine Driver (Convenor) and Stephen Gee.

The documents received electronically prior to the visit were:-

- Assessment forms / supervisor report forms
- Code of Ethics
- Complaint procedure
- Course description and Assessment procedures
- Criteria for training therapists and supervisors
- Handbook
- History of seminar programme from 03
- Information to the course and how to apply.
- Job descriptions
- Marking criteria for written papers
- Prospectus
- Protocols for Training Committee Members 07
- Reading List
- Review since last quinquennial + plus outline of course etc.
- Trainee application Form
- Work Groups from 03

The day was organised into meetings with the Training Committee and Senior Offices, Training Staff etc, Current and recently qualified members and ended with a final meeting with the Training Committee and Senior Officers. Each meeting was 1 hour in length. The meetings took place at the venue at which the training is held at the Postgraduate Education Centre, City Hospital, Birmingham.

1. Meeting with Training Committee and Senior Officer (11.30 – 12.30)

Present Rosie Hogg, Helen Flanagan and Anne Samson

RH, HF, AS and CP (who joined for the final meeting) form the Training Committee. They are in regular contact with each other about the running of the training and communication about the training and the trainees appeared to be good.

Philosophy:-

The first area of discussion was the philosophy that underpins the training. It was clarified that since its original inception in the early 1990's that it had changed, 5 years ago, to a training in Contemporary Psychotherapy. This was in order to include areas such as inter-subjectivity, relational, neuroscience and other recent areas of knowledge and theory into the curriculum

Applicants:-

They receive two to three applications a year. The training is advertised in the main journals such as UKCP, BACP, Karnac etc., but a lot of people arrive by word of mouth. The open seminars are also used as 'taster seminars' for those contemplating the training. The Training Committee were considering how to get it known more widely. One issue that the training struggles with is that there are currently no analysts in Birmingham. They hope this will change as this will making provision of therapy and supervision easier.

Application:-

Consideration is given to psychological mindedness and if an applicant has had no prior clinical experience then they would be asked to find a clinical placement so as to gain this. In the application process there are two interviews and a third analytic interview. This provides a good view of the applicant. The application process is rigorous and provides a good view of the applicant. The final decision is taken by the Training Committee

The rolling model of the trainee intake provides a flexible format that enables the training to expand trainee numbers in a non rigid structure and enables new trainees to learn from those who have been on the training for longer. Feedback from staff and trainees indicated that this was a useful model of training.

Seminars:-

Clarification was sought regarding the format of the Saturday teaching days as to when core theory is taught, when there is wider exploration and also the situation regarding the seminars which are open to a wider audience.

It was made clear that the morning work groups are where key themes and theory are considered and explored. There is a timetable in relation to this. The seminars are intended to expand on specific themes. These are open to a wider audience but all people wanting to attend are 'screened' via an application process so that only appropriate people are allowed to attend. These seminars are also open to people interested in training so that they get a taste of what is on offer which seemed a useful means of enabling potential trainees to find out about the training programme. At the end of the Saturday there is a Case Discussion group just for the trainees where they can discuss clinical material. There are five such Saturdays a term.

The structure and content of the Saturdays is well thought through with an emphasis on contemporary thinking in line with the name of the training. We discussed the

curriculum and this appears to be frequently under review but time constraints restrict what can be covered. Consideration of the training days was thorough and the team had a good hold on the aim and content of all aspect of the seminars, work groups and case discussion programme.

Qualifying Paper:-

The qualifying paper is written on a patient other than the training patient so that the Training committee have three views of the trainees' work i.e., the two Training Patients presented to their approved supervisors and a third patient that the paper is written on. This seemed a useful way of getting a range of views on the clinical work as well as obtaining a view of patient work that was independent of the well supervised work with training patients.

Therapists and Supervisors:-

This is an area which presents a challenge for the training and trainees as many trainees have to travel large distances to therapy and supervision. TCPP are now in the position of using their own graduates as therapists and supervisors but members of the Training Committee cannot be Training Therapists. They are now exploring whether members of the Training Committee could be Training supervisors. The issue of Training Therapists and Supervisors is an area which they are exploring further because of the wide geographical area that trainees come from.

Assessments:-

There is a clear process for this. The supervisors send reports and the papers are marked by two markers. Assessments are considered at the biannual meetings which consist of the 4 members of the Training Committee plus two external examiners. The aim is to encourage students to be independent learners and the annual essays are a way of establishing this.

In addition there is feedback from trainees re each event in the term. Tutors give feedback to trainees and supervisors show trainees their reports.

The process for assessment is well considered and clear.

Overall the Training Committee commented that they all enjoy what they do and that the trainees are highly thought of.

Library Facilities

It was subsequently clarified that in addition to the PEP archive and a small collection of books housed in the WMIP offices the administrator for the TCPP keeps a small library of books and journals including the IJPA. Trainees have a list of these and can ask her to bring books to be borrowed to the seminars or post them papers.

Membership of WMIP

Graduates from the training become members of WMIP

2. Meeting with Training Staff, Supervisors and Seminar Leaders etc.

Initially we met with the staff team who are not part of the Training Committee, namely:- seminar leaders (Debbie Williams, Helen Maté and Brian Truckle), the infant observation leader (Brian Truckle), and one supervisor (Brian Truckle).

We discussed with them issues surrounding the work group modules. BT commented that he was involved in the planning and development of the year and all commented that they can input reading material to the modules. Seminar leaders are usually invited to teach modules.

We explored with them how trainees get hold of core theory as well as the contemporary issues. DW commented that there was an active critique of Freud in the light of more contemporary thinkers e.g., Meltzer. From the comments it was clear that trainees worked hard to get hold of past and current concepts and theory and that the seminar leaders were impressed by the way trainees integrate the material and also bring in new and relevant theory which they have come across which demonstrates initiative and flexibility in thinking.

SG raised the issue of how much attention is given to language in relation to diversity in the work groups and seminars. Issue of identity and difference was something HM felt was integrated. SG asked specifically how homosexuality was address and RH subsequently clarified that there are seminars specifically on homosexuality. The issue of more specific reading/seminars/work groups on sexuality was discussed.

Their Links with the Training Committee

The Training Committee make the contacts with the staff team and the staff team have mostly come together as a result of personal contacts over many years. As a supervisor BT clarified that the only main contact with the Training was via submission of supervisory reports. They don't meet as a staff team and we discussed this.

At this point Rosie Hogg, Helen Flanagan and Anne Samson joined the meetings (Christine Pitt was involved in the seminars).

We looked at processes for formal and informal feedback to the trainees and the role of the bi-annual meetings. The Training Committee take the lead in this and primarily brief work group leaders verbally. It was indicated that as it is an intimate training with small numbers of staff etc., that they don't really need formal procedures. I would suggest they think further re this so as to ensure that there are no grounds for complaint by a trainee if something goes wrong in their training.

At the end of this discussion we discussed with them the strengths and weaknesses of the training. Overall it was felt that the strength and weakness of the training were the same i.e., that it is not purist. BT valued the fact that it was organic, there was a lot of thinking going on, it was open to new ideas and did not have a rigid or bureaucratic structure. It was also agreed that the training depends on the quality of the students.

HM and AS both commented that the training staff do not all meet as a training group. Finding time for such meetings was an issue but it was also felt it might pick up problems in the training as well as considering developments. It would be useful for TCPP to consider at least annual meetings of the staff team in order to reflect on the training, needs of the trainees, course developments etc. BT commented that many of these issues come up in the papers that the trainees write.

3. Meeting with trainees and recently qualified members.

We met with 8 trainees and 2 graduates. Of the trainees there was one first year, two second years, two third years, two fourth years, and one sixth year. They come from a range of backgrounds including, two GP's, a Psychiatrist, Nurses, Counsellors and a Methodist Minister.

The trainees said they enjoy the fact that the training includes a mix of year groups as this enables integration of a wide range of experience. There is an informal support network amongst the trainees. They were clear about the time-table and although the Saturday course days were very full and long they all felt they were extremely useful and made the best use of time. They felt they had the right amount of contact with the organisation and overall valued the training and thought highly of it.

Specific points were raised in relation to the following issues:-

Seminars

Overall there are about 60 speakers and this involves a lot of papers etc. Trainees said they would like to receive the papers earlier as often they arrive quite late with not enough time to read them before the seminar. They commented that they would also like the reading lists for the work discussion groups before the beginning of term.

Overall they felt positive about the work groups and seminars. They felt they allowed them to explore and draw on their own experience. They did not feel infantilised by them and felt they were an opportunity to develop their own thinking. Overall they were very positive about the Saturday training days.

Training Patients.

This area of the training evoked a lot of discussion. Only two out of the eight trainees at the meeting had training patients and a further two who were not at the meeting also have training patients. Trainees expressed frustration at the difficulty of getting training patients especially as the training is not linked to a clinic. However it was pointed out that because of the geographical scatter of the trainees a clinic would not be helpful to most of them.

Trainees have raised the issue of training patients with Rosie Hogg and have suggested TCPP write to other organisations such as GP's and the NHS etc., to try to get training patients. Trainees commented that tutors do give suggestions about who they could

contact about getting training patients but it was felt that TCPP itself needs to be more proactive re this and work at getting the training more widely known to possible referrers.

This was a clear area of frustration and concern especially given that only four trainees have training patients. We would recommend that TCPP take more proactive steps to contact and liaise with GP's, NHS Services, MIND etc., in order to develop links and referrals of training patients.

Psychiatric Placement.

Many trainees had found it difficult to find a psychiatric placement however only one trainee is currently looking for a psychiatric placement. The trainees felt that the Training Committee were understanding but again would like the Training Committee to be more proactive in making links to possible placement opportunities. In relation to this and training patients trainees felt they were hitting areas which was holding them back in the trainings.

Linked to this was the issue of getting clinical experience. The option of private practice arose and their ethical concerns re this. This is a very pertinent point in relation to ethical practice, insurance and the move towards registration. We think TCPP need to consider where trainees are undertaking other clinical work especially as it is assumed by TCPP that this is taking place e.g., in relation to the final qualifying paper.

Application Process

Overall there was a good experience of the application process but two trainees felt the interview sessions were unhelpful and felt that boundaries were crossed by reports being sent to the third interviewer (i.e., the analytic interview) and that this spilled into being therapy.

On reflection we wonder if the processes of application and who sees what report are not sufficiently apparent to a potential trainee and that may have lead to this dissatisfaction. However we are also aware that selection interviews can be a challenging experience to people who are not used to such searching and analytic interviews and consider that this might be the reason for such a response.

Overall the Training Handbook is very clear but perhaps this is an area where a clearer explanation of the process application and what it being looked for would be helpful.

Membership of WMIP.

The Trainees feel part of the training and feel affiliated to TCPP. However they felt there was scope for greater links between TCPP and WMIP and that they were not very aware of WMIP whilst in training. It was felt that more input from WMIP was needed.

The student representative is taken from the training body as a whole and currently is from the Jungian training. They therefore do not have direct contact with the trainee representative to WMIP.

We think it would be useful to consider having a representative from both TCPP and the Jungian training to WMIP so that TCPP is always directly represented and trainees have a direct link with their graduate body.

4. Plenary meeting with Training Committee and Senior Staff

Rosie Hogg, Christine Pitt, Helen Flanagan and Anne Samson

CD and SG fed back to the Senior Staff team (Training Committee) that they found the TCPP Training well organised, well held and that it reflected a sincere and significant attempt to keep a broad focus on theory and clinical practice. In addition the rolling programme was helpful and supportive and the training days well thought through.

The difficulties that were raised by the trainees were discussed and RH commented that they are putting into action plans to help trainees get training patients as well as finding Psychiatric Placements. There was a useful discussion about this and it was clear that the team are aware of the problems and are working on them.

We also discussed the issue of the selection process and the team again were aware of the problems but felt the process were clear. There was a useful discussion about running a training and the tightrope that is required between being supportive and being challenging. In discussing this and the assessment process it was apparent that the training, from selection onwards, is both rigorous and thorough. It was also clear that the Training Committee had thought through the selection process and were aware that it could seem challenging to individuals not used to such a transparent and analytic process. The TCPP team made it clear that their selection included a wider responsibility in that they did not want people on the course who would be unsafe therapists or for whom it was unsuitable.

Links to WMIP

The final part of our discussion with the Training Committee concerned the confusion at the beginning of the day when CD and SG had gone to the WMIP centre and not the Postgraduate Education Centre, City Hospital, Birmingham where the training is held. CD and SG had not received any instructions that the meeting was to be at City Hospital and we concluded that these had not been forwarded on from the UKCP office as only electronic documentation had been received.

However it did raise an interesting question of the links TCPP has with WMIP. Although TCPP is under the WMIP umbrella it seems more 'virtual' and the connection is not readily apparent to trainees. We suggested that TCPP consider this and whether there is a sense of dislocation from their WMIP home which needs to be identified and explored. It had certainly felt that way to us on the day.

5. Conclusion

The visit clearly conveyed the nature of the training and we met a range of staff and trainees which gave a real sense of what the training offers and how it is run.

The training offers a thorough grounding in theory and practice and has some well thought out ways of integrating theory and practice and providing a wide range of theoretical input and clinical discussion through the work groups, seminars and case discussion groups. In addition it encourages a wide focus on clinical work and plenty of opportunities to discuss case material and theory as well as the more intense focus on specific cases in supervision.

There were a few areas that we would suggest require further consideration, namely:-

We would recommend that the Training Committee continue their work to have a more proactive system to obtain training patients and psychiatric placements and to develop links with GP's, NHS provision, MIND and other mental health services to facilitate this.

We would recommend that they consider developing some more formal structures between the Training Committee and the seminar leaders, work group leaders etc so that there is regular feedback and reviews of the course and also of trainees.

We would recommend that links to WMIP be more apparent for the trainees and that perhaps the Handbook needs to include a map of the location of the training as well as information about WMIP.

We would recommend that enlarging the library facilities be considered.

Overall however we were very satisfied by the quality of the training and the thoughtful and rigorous way it was implemented and developed. The Training Committee clearly have a good hold on the training and the trainees and work conscientiously to ensure it is of a high standard in terms of theory taught and the clinical work.

We have no hesitation in recommending that the TCPP training pass their quinquennial review.

Christine Driver (Convenor)
Stephen Gee

24th June 2008