
FROM THE EDITOR

Changes in the way NHS psychological services are commissioned are likely to affect many of us in the months to come. From April this year, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) replaced primary care trusts (PCTs) as the organisers of funding to the NHS; with their introduction came a range of possible commissioning models, one of which, Any Qualified Provider (AQP), aims to introduce competition into the marketplace and increase patient choice.

Changes can be unnerving: under AQP, which isn't mandatory for commissioners but has already been introduced in some areas, existing psychological therapy providers may find themselves in competition with newly-contracted services to win NHS referrals. On the other hand, AQP has the potential to ensure a choice of counselling and psychotherapy services that are tailored to the needs of local communities. It could also mean that there will be a wider choice of therapy modalities available to clients and so more opportunity for services and/or individuals to provide them on the NHS.

Although the CCGs didn't officially take control of NHS commissioning until April 2013, many did exist in shadow form before that, and AQP has been operational in some places since last year. In a continuation of our series of articles on commissioning, we talk to pioneers who have already gained AQP status, with the aim of helping others prepare for the process.

Keeping you updated on changes in healthcare is part of the work of this journal, but many of the features in this issue remind us that the work we do with clients continues despite the upheaval often going on around us. Mike Kelly's article on working with clients diagnosed with a chronic condition focuses on some of the psychological processes a client can go through as they begin to find ways of enabling them to cope. Written with therapists working in primary care in mind but informative to all, Lyndsey Holt's article on recognising psychosis aims to inform practitioners who could play a part in identification and instigating the assessment process to specialist services. Important because, as Lyndsey stresses, early detection and treatment of this severe mental illness is vital as chances of recovery are increased the sooner it is diagnosed.

Elsewhere, we have a range of articles covering a breadth of subjects, from hospice counselling and hypnotherapy, to sex therapy and using exercise to treat depression. And, to serve as inspiration, we feature a piece by person-centred therapist Michelle Oldale who, in an endeavour to reconnect with her values, make a positive impact, and engage in reflection, explored what it would take to become an aid worker. Michelle's article brings us a welcome reminder of the ongoing requirement to look after ourselves in the work we do – never more important than at a time of change.



Sarah Hovington, *Editor*
 hcpj.editorial@bacp.co.uk