

# Letter from the Chair

Dasha Grajfoner

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**B**Y THE TIME *The Coaching Psychologist* (TCP) lands on your doorstep we will just about to start our 5th European Coaching Psychology Conference: 'Breaking New Ground'. The conference includes a number of keynote speakers: Professor Roger Steare; Dr Helen Turnbull; Dr Tatiana Bachkirova; Dr Suzy Green, who is also running a pre-conference workshop on positive psychology coaching; Donna Willis; and myself. We are also very pleased that the President of the British Psychological Society (BPS), Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes, will be speaking at the conference. The streams, running over both days are: Leadership; executive and business coaching; Positive psychology coaching; Tools and techniques in coaching psychology; and last but not least coaching psychology research network (with updates in this issue of TCP). Conference feedback from last year has shaped the programme and the structure of the conference this year.

On a similar note, I would like to express my gratitude to all who have responded to our member survey. The exercise has been very insightful and has indicated what the areas of improvement are. However, I am very pleased to say that the survey also demonstrated that the strategy of the SGCP, aims of the committee and the views of our members are aligned and, therefore, the SGCP continues to provide an overall good service and good value for money to our members.

Therefore, in this 'Letter from the Chair' I would like to focus on the survey and highlight a few issues that have emerged from it. Many comments highlighted the good work of the SGCP, and its importance to develop and promote coaching psychology as a profession within and outside the BPS. Other comments, however, raised additional

issues that we must reflect on, for example, how to improve our activities to meet the emerging needs and expectations of our membership and developing profession.

The response rate was fairly good and about 15 per cent ( $N=333$ ) of our members have engaged in the survey. To start with, 82 per cent of respondents hold full membership and over 55 per cent are satisfied or very satisfied with their membership in the group.

Additional comments on member satisfaction have surfaced a few interesting topics. Most respondents are satisfied with our two publications, especially with articles combining theory with practical implementation. Pro-activity of the group, yearly events, networking opportunities, CPD activities and peer practice groups are also highly appreciated. Given that the SGCP is a very diverse group, cross divisional collaborations are acknowledged and celebrated, however they are most desirable and must be developed further.

Suggested areas for improvement are communication within the SGCP and greater sense of direction. Perhaps the current Strategic Plan will address some of these issues. A number of respondents highlight the need for more regional events and less London-centric approach. We aim to do that with our CPD events, peer practice groups and conferences outside London. The responses also reflect the current needs of the discipline, that is, the need for good quality evidence, more collaborative research groups and consequently better quantitative data. Establishing the Coaching Psychology Research Network under the lead of Professor Sarah Corrie is already taking the initiative to address those concerns and to establish international research connections.

Looking at the future provisions of the SGCP over 80 per cent of respondents would like more peer practice groups, CPD and networking events, and workshops designed to enhance coaching psychology practice. Over 50 per cent would also like to see more events that include dissemination of research into practice.

When asked about the highest priority areas of the SGCP, building the evidence base through research, informing standards for practice and supervision and providing a training route are clear stand outs, with over 70 per cent and over 50 per cent of respondents respectively.

Looking ahead, we cannot avoid looking at the position of the SGCP within the BPS. A survey question asked about the possibility of developing the SGCP into a Division and over 80 per cent of respondents support this option. The main reasons for their support are increased recognition and status for coaching psychology and psychologists, and strengthening the profession within and outside the BPS.

The survey has provided most valuable views from you, our members, and has given us as a group an indication on how and where we would like to be in the near future. These are exciting times with plenty of work ahead of us. Consequently, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to step forward and to contribute to the work of the committee.

I would also like to say thank you on behalf of the SGCP committee to Siobhain O’Riordan, who will be stepping down as the Editor of *TCP* after this December 2015 issue. Siobhain has done a brilliant job as the Editor of *TCP* and has been a supportive colleague and a great pleasure to work with.

Finally, I wish to conclude this ‘Letter from the Chair’ with an invitation to the 5th European Coaching Psychology Conference. The event is taking place on the 10th and 11th of December 2015 at the Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury, in London. As always, the conference is an excellent opportunity to meet, connect, and collaborate with colleagues from around the world, so please attend and support your Special Group.

The SGCP committee, and I, look forward to meeting you at the conference.

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