# Knowledge and context networks

Our current situation

The Society's current Sections, Special Groups, Divisions, Faculties and Interest Groups fall under the general heading of knowledge and context groups. They exist to promote psychological knowledge, both pure and applied, and to promote the efficiency and usefulness of their members.

They do this through delivering conferences and professional development activities, producing publications (both regular and occasional) and developing guidance and guidelines on areas of scientific or professional interest to the network.

Currently we have 15 Sections, 3 Special Groups and 10 Divisions. Within these Divisions we have 47 specialist interest groups including Network and Interest Groups, Faculties and interest groups of Faculties.

These groups serve member needs within their specialist areas. Some are in the same or overlapping areas of professional interest, and If we include geographical subgroups this results in 146 groups in total.
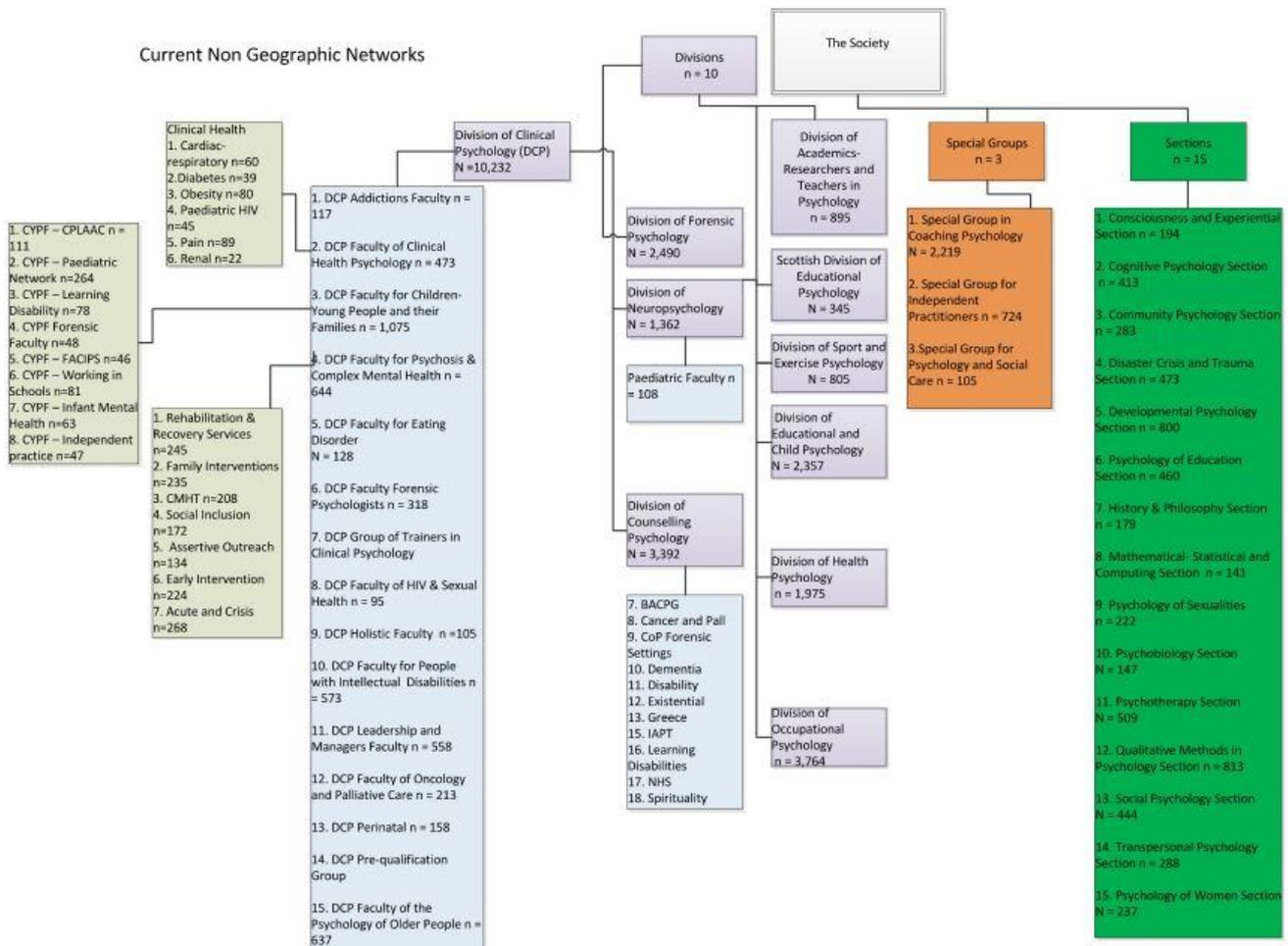
Why we are recommending changes

The Society recognises that its networks bring highly valued benefits to the membership.

They provide a focus for specialist areas and deliver conferences, professional development, networking opportunities and a wealth of other resources.

However, the number of networks we have means that increasing amounts of resource are needed to support these networks for administrative functions which add little value to members or the psychological agenda, and the complexity which arises from networks sitting within other networks several layers below the decision making point adds a burden which slows down decision making processes, leads to duplication and makes it harder for expert input to have an impact.

We are recommending changes so that the Society can

- Have a greater impact for psychology

- Deliver services to more of our members more effectively

- Have much simpler, shorter and more transparent decision making processes

- Have simpler and more responsive financial processes

- Invest in provision of staff resource with relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience in order to achieve the Society's desired impact and leverage the specialist psychological input of our members much more effectively

In order to achieve this we are making recommendations which will

- Reduce the length of reporting lines, so that all member networks are only one step away from the central governance function

- Merge networks from different parts of the Society which exist to serve the same subject or context area

- Protect specialist interest areas by hosting them as continuing work streams within larger cognate networks

Our vision for our Knowledge and Context groups

Our ambition as an organisation is to have an impact such that people, organisations and communities are equipped with the everyday psychological knowledge to navigate an increasingly complex world, and that everyone is able to access evidence-based psychology to enhance their lives, communities and wider society.

In order to support the achievement of this aim our member networks provide a forum to promote and support the development and dissemination of psychological knowledge, principles and skills.

To facilitate this we are proposing that the current distinction between different network types will be removed, allowing all networks more flexibility in their activities and promoting parity of esteem across all networks.

All networks will then be known as BPS [_____] Psychology.

The **role** of our knowledge & context networks is to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of a specific area of psychology, both for the development of the discipline and to encourage the application of psychological knowledge in the wider psychological community, and to provide a forum for psychologists with shared interests or working in particular contexts or areas of the discipline.

Purpose statements for each network will be tailored to that particular network's remit and requirements, but will broadly fit the following format:

BPS [XXXX] Psychology exists to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of [xxxx] psychology

- [and an understanding of its contribution to the body of psychological knowledge],
- [applied to the practice of psychology within the context of _____]

These may be further developed as and when the objects of the Society are revised.

Remit

In order to achieve the aims of the organisation the network will be empowered to act, within Society policies, to:

➢ Promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology by holding conferences, symposia and scientific meetings

➢ Support the excellence of their members by delivering professional development and networking opportunities through any appropriate means, including (but not limited to) workshops, events and on line resources

➢ Produce and publish, for their members, newsletters, periodicals, papers, discussion documents and information.

➢ Run grant schemes to encourage activities in support of the network's purpose

➢ Make awards in recognition of excellence within the scope of the network's area of expertise

➢ Run bursary schemes to support members' engagement in network activities

➢ Communicate with members through appropriate electronic and physical media, including the use of social media

There will be clear and effective processes in place for networks to follow if they wish to propose activities which fall outside of their remit or to propose collaborative, cross Society activities which are only partially within their remit.

How this will make things work better

The network structure will be simpler because subnetworks will no longer exist. This means that expert context networks will operate within the main structures of the Society and expert voices will be present at the Board and Senate level, influencing Society priorities, public affairs, research, practice, education and training.

There will be fewer networks than we have at present because networks covering the same area of interest will be merged and networks which fall below the 1% of membership threshold will merge with larger cognate groups.

There will be less duplication of effort because networks covering the same context or knowledge area will be merged.

Networks will have clearer remits and governance lines will be shorter. This will improve the Society's decision making processes, enabling us to act more quickly.

The change in nomenclature will emphasise that the network is part of the BPS and will help to promote parity of esteem across networks

How we will get there

In the long term the formal changes to member networks will require changes to the Charter, Statutes and Rules.

There is, however, enough flexibility under the current Rules to make many of the proposed changes as part of the transition.

The first step will be to merge subnetworks which represent the same topic or context area. These subnetworks do not have a formal place in the current Charter, Statutes and Rules, so this change can be undertaken as part of the transition.

The next step is to invite networks which meet the size criteria (1% of the Society's membership) to apply to become knowledge and context groups.

This can be done under a provision in the statutes which allows the Trustees to establish member networks.

In order to achieve these steps we will engage in a further dialogue with networks and facilitate a process which allows networks to agree their mergers and new relationships.

In order to ensure that member benefit is not lost as part of this process those current groups which are too small to meet the 1% threshold will continue as work streams of an appropriate larger network.

We will also review and revise the rules regarding the formation and dissolution of member networks.

➢ In the longer term the way we currently operate the 1% rule is not fit for purpose. It does not guarantee membership of the new group if it is formed and takes too long to achieve

➢ The length of time taken to form new networks means that we do not support the development of the discipline effectively

➢ The rules for closing networks are not strong, meaning that networks with very few members continue even when there is little interest in the area they represent

It is likely that we will develop a way for new areas of interest to start activity, fostered within an existing related area of psychological interest. This will allow development of activity related to an emergent body of relevant scientific literature.

Membership commitment for the area of interest can then be developed alongside activity which establishes the Society's reputation in the area.

Where interest in an area wanes, it is likely that similarly, remaining activity which is still important to the discipline can be hosted again as a work stream within a related network.