

## ACP-UK Inaugural Conference

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### Abstract

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*Title:* Psychologists as Approved Clinicians: An Exercise in Power through Leadership

The England & Wales Mental Health Act 2007 introduced the approved clinician (AC) role that extends legal powers previously reserved to medics to other professions. ACs are appointed by the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care via regional approvals panels and can act as the responsible clinician (RC) for patients subject to the Mental Health Act. RCs have overall responsibility for a patient's care and treatment, including medication, even if the RC is not qualified to administer that treatment. The introduction of this new role was strongly contested by a number of stakeholders, including the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Some ten years after the implementation of this role, psychologists and other eligible professions have exercised all of the powers available to them under the law – albeit in small numbers. The extended AC role can be viewed as statutory manifestation of *New Ways of Working* in that it enables distributed clinical leadership based on competencies rather than profession. In this presentation, the nature and development of the AC role is described along with some of the enablers and obstacles to its implementation in the wider healthcare economy. Emphasis is given to how the power invested in this role can be harnessed to promote change and improvements in clinical models and services to better meet patients' needs and improve access to evidence-based interventions. This is particularly important in the context of *New Ways of Working* which explicitly aims to achieve cultural change to enable more person-centred care and patient choice.

#### *Biographical Note:*

John L Taylor is Professor of Clinical Psychology at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne and Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Associate Director for Psychological Services with Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust. Dr Taylor is a chartered clinical and forensic psychologist. He is Chair of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Mental Health Act Advisory Group and Approved Clinician Peer-Review Panel, a Past President of the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP), and a former Chair of the BPS Faculty for Forensic Clinical Psychology. Recently he has served on NICE Guideline Development and Quality Standard groups and the MHA Independent Review Advisory Group. Dr Taylor was one of the first two psychologists to be approved as an Approved Clinician in England following the MHA 2007. He has

published more than 140 research papers, articles, books and book chapters mainly concerning the mental health and forensic needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dr Taylor received an award for *Outstanding Contribution to Applied Practice* from the BPS Faculty for Forensic Clinical Psychology in 2017 and was elected an Honorary Fellow of the BABCP in 2018 for his work on developing CBT for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.