

Meeting with Professional Association Representatives, 18 July 2008

CNHC CoChairs, Maggie Dunn and Maggy Wallace were delighted to host a meeting at the King's Fund on Friday 18 July, designed to welcome representatives from the professional associations with an interest in the work of CNHC and provide an update on CNHC activity to date. Over 60 people were present, representing all 12 professions who have been working with the Foundation for Integrated Health on their standards for regulation. We were also pleased to welcome a variety of other interested participants.



A presentation on the key achievements and key challenges for CNHC was made, followed by a question and answer session. Emphasis was placed on the key roles of the professional associations in supporting practitioners and determining professional standards, as a complement to CNHC's work as the voluntary regulator.

A lively debate covered a range of topics, including public protection, the cost of regulation, the advantages of having one regulator that the public can go to, public relations and publicity.

Susan Elizabeth, CNHC's part time Chief Executive and Registrar closed the session with a resume of the key issues discussed, as follows:

'The discussion has touched several times on the future roles and responsibilities of the professional associations and CNHC as the regulator. Whilst we would be taking on very different roles, it was clear from the debate that there is great mutual interdependence and mutual benefit to be realised. CNHC will wish to encourage practitioners who are not already a member of a professional association to join one. This is where they will find support for their continuing professional development and – in the worst case scenario – where they would find support in the event of a complaint against them. The professional associations, in turn, will wish to encourage their members to register with CHNC, thereby giving reassurance to the general public about their standards of practice. It was noted from the floor that CNHC has a powerful role to play in educating the public about the CNHC "brand" and thereby contributing to the standing of complementary therapies.

It was also noted that the blueprint for the regulatory body given to CNHC by the Federal Working Group has some shortcomings. In particular, CNHC is keen to look at how it can increase professional involvement in its work in a way that is consistent with the spirit of the FWG report and with wider regulatory best practice.

There was a range of views about the likely cost of registration. Some felt it to be reasonable and good value, others felt it was too high. CNHC noted those concerns and re-stated its commitment to achieving a sustainable, credible voluntary regulatory body as cost-effectively as possible. There is nothing to be gained by establishing an organisation that cannot deliver effectively.

Finally, it was encouraging to hear how widespread was the willingness to work with CNHC in meeting its challenging agenda and we felt incredibly heartened by the positive responses people had given us.'